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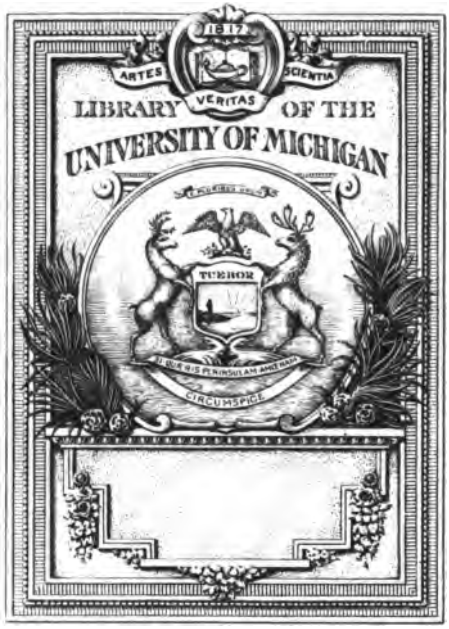

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, STUDIES,

AND

WRITINGS,

By WILLIAM JONES, M.A. F.R.S.

ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAINS,

AND LONG HIS MOST INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND.

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DISCOURSES,

&c.

DISCOURSE I.

THE DUTY OF SELF-DENIAL.

MATTHEW, XVI. 24.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me let him DENY HIMSELF.

"A HARD saying; who can hear it? Has God "then implanted appetites and affections in me, "only that I may be at the trouble of crossing and "mortifying them? Has he spread pleasures and de-"lights before me, for no other end than that I may "act the self-tormentor all my days, by abstaining "from them? It is a conduct unreasonable in itself, "and dishonourable to his nature. It cannot be. "I will go back, and walk no more with the author of "such a religion as this."

Reflections like these will but too naturally arise in the uninstructed or the ill-instructed mind, when passages are read from the Gospel (and many

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such passages there are) of a similar import with that which has been selected for the subject of our present meditations. "To imagine," says a late philosopher, "that the gratifying any of the senses, "or the indulging any delicacy in meats, drinks, or "apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a "head that is not disordered by the phrensies of a "fanatical enthusiasm." And we have seen the pen of a celebrated historian employed in representing the primitive Christians as a set of poor, moping, melancholy, miserable fanatics, because they observed the self-denying precepts of their Saviour, instead of adopting the "elegant mythology of the "Greeks," and the no less elegant manners of the Romans.

The matter, therefore, deserves a serious and diligent inquiry. The goodness of God forbids us to suppose that he would willingly grieve or afflict the children of men. Indeed, he himself assures us that he never doth so. And he who has bestowed on man the faculty of reason, can issue no commands which are not founded on the highest and most perfect reason—"He who formed the eye, shall he not "see?" It shall, therefore, be the design of the following discourse to evince, that the Divine wisdom shines not forth more conspicuously in any one precept of the Gospel than in this, whereby a man is enjoined to DENY HIMSELF.

The point shall be argued from the nature of man; from the nature of religion; from the influence exerted by the body upon the soul; from the many instances of self-denial practised by the men of the

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world; and from the reward annexed to the practice of it among Christians.

In the first place, then, be it assumed as a principle, that human nature is in a state of depravity and corruption. Man is not upright. His passions and affections do not naturally move in subordination to the higher principle within him, but are disposed to rebellion. There are in his constitution certain irregular desires and evil propensities, which are continually breaking forth into action. In the multitude of newspapers daily published among us, there is not one but contains abundant evidence to satisfy the most sceptical mind in this particular.

For *this* reason it is, that self-denial is become, as it were, the form and substance of every virtue; for so far as we deny our natural corrupt tempers, so far we seem to advance in virtue. We are so far humble, for instance, as we deny ourselves in the instances of pride; so far heavenly minded, as we deny our earthly inclinations; so far charitable, as we deny our tempers of self-love and envy; so far temperate and pure, as we deny those appetites, which, if indulged, would render us otherwise: and thus every virtue seems to have its chief foundation in the denial of some corrupt temper of our nature. The matter lies in a narrow compass. Were we upright and perfect, virtue would consist in *following* our inclinations, because those inclinations would tend only to good; as we are fallen and depraved, virtue consists in *denying* our inclinations, because those inclinations tend often to evil.

Upon this principle it is, and because the depravity

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of our nature begins to show itself very early in operation; that children, as they cannot be made to understand the necessity of denying *themselves*, unless we would see them spoiled and ruined, must be denied by *others* who are about them, their parents or governors. Systems of education, however differing in other respects, all centred here, till some years ago, upon the Continent, arose a genius, brilliant as a comet, but, like that, eccentric and portentous! who surprised the world by advancing, in substance and effect, the following propositions—"That no kind of habits ought to be impressed on "children: that you ought never to teach them obe-"dience as a duty: that you should leave them to "the natural consequences of their own actions: and "that, when reason comes to exert itself in a ma-"turer state, all will be right."—Should the experiment ever be tried in England, the event will only verify what has been predicted, in a beautiful apostrophe to the pupil of this new philosopher, by an elegant writer of our own—"Emilius! how I trem-"ble for thee, while I see thee exposed to the care "of thy too ingenious tutor! Fortunate wilt thou be, "if thou reachest the end of thy fifth year! Nay "rather, fortunate wilt thou be, if those accidents "which must inevitably attend thy situation, deprive "thee of a life destined to future misery from the ills "of body and of mind, contracted through this early "and continued indulgence of thy infant caprices!—"I see thee wilful to thy parents, domineering in the "nursery; surfeiting on meats, bursting with liquids; "inflaming thy body with noxious humours, thy mind

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" with unquiet passions; running headlong into dan-
" gers which thou canst not foresee, and habits which
" thou canst not eradicate; mischievous to others, but
" fatal to thyself!"

In things of higher and more important concern, which respect not time but eternity, we are all in a situation too nearly resembling that of *Emilius*, unless placed under the discipline of a better tutor. That tutor must be Religion; from the design of which shall be adduced a

Second argument in favour of self-denial. Religion supposes the corruption of our nature, and is given to heal and restore it—a consideration which will carry us a step farther into the nature of this evangelical duty. For the physician who undertakes to cure a disease, must of course, while he administers proper medicines, enjoin his patient to abstain from every thing (however pleasing and agreeable) which may, in any degree, counteract those medicines, and nourish the disease. The wisdom and the kindness of the physician are manifested by the injunction, whatever the sick man may, and through ignorance, frowardness, and peevishness, probably will, think to the contrary. It is easy therefore to conceive, that many indulgences, though in themselves not, strictly speaking, perhaps *vicious* or *immoral*, may yet be prohibited as dangerous on account of the infirmity of our minds; for the same quantity of wine which would be of no disservice to a person in health, might prove fatal to one in a fever. In this light human nature is considered (and surely with the utmost truth and propriety) by the Gospel. We are fallen into a

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state of sin, and being so fallen, we find ourselves in a fallen world, where, unless we are upon our guard, every thing around us will contribute to aggravate and inflame the distemper. Therefore, are we, in *mercy*, commanded to abstain. Christ came to deliver us from this state of sin and death, and to restore us to all those tempers which may best prepare us for a state of glory, with immortal spirits, in another and a better world to come. Now what are those tempers? Read the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and see:—humility, meekness, mourning, purity, heavenly-mindedness, righteousness, peace, patience, resignation, and joy in being counted worthy to suffer abuse, ridicule, and persecution for our Saviour's sake. We must renounce our religion, or acknowledge the excellency of these tempers, and the necessity of their being formed in us, that our Redeemer may pronounce us *blessed*. If therefore we find ourselves engaged in any habits of life, in a course of any indulgences and enjoyments, any pleasures or diversions, which prevent the formation of these tempers in us, and tend to strengthen and confirm their opposites, in such instances it will undoubtedly be expedient to practise self-denial. When we return home in the evening, before we retire to our rest, let us sometimes, for the experiment's sake, only read over the first twelve verses of our Lord's sermon on the mount, and observe how our minds stand affected toward them. If at any time we are in doubt concerning a particular employment or amusement, instead of inquiring nicely into the lawfulness of it, and whether there be in Scripture any special pro-

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hibition of it, the shorter and safer way is to ask oneself, whether it be agreeable to the general spirit of Christianity? whether it tend to beget and increase in us all the holy tempers of that divine religion, or to suppress and extinguish them?

To account for the strictness of the Gospel precepts, and the manners of the first Christians, it is likewise to be observed under this head, that if we would possess the power of self-control in things unlawful, we must sometimes exercise it in things lawful; as he who wishes to avoid a fall from a precipice, if he be a prudent man, will not venture too near the verge of it. The desires that have been suffered, upon all occasions, to *reach* the line which separates virtue from vice, will by a very small temptation be seduced to *pass* it. The Christian soldier, like all others, must be put under the discipline of war in the time of peace, or when the hour of actual service arrives, he will be found greatly wanting. He who has accustomed himself to govern his thoughts and words, will easily govern his actions; and he who has learned at proper seasons to abstain, will find no difficulty in being temperate.—It may be added, that he who has attained to temperance, has gone a great way towards the acquisition of many other virtues.—This leads us to a

Third reason upon which the doctrine of self-denial is founded, namely, the influence which the body exerts upon the soul. So great and extensive is this influence, that the fall of man seems to have consisted very much in the subjection of the soul to the power and dominion of the body; as the characteristic mark

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of his restoration through Christ is the reduction of the body under the power and dominion of the soul. For thus the Scriptures describe the whole process as a contest between the *flesh* and the *spirit*, ending, after many struggles and vicissitudes, in the victory of the latter. "The corruptible body," says the wise man, "presseth down the soul, and the earthly ta-"bernacle weigheth down the mind." It must be our endeavour, as it is both our interest and our duty, to take off as much as may be, this *pressure*, and to diminish this *weight*. The body must have its supplies, or the soul will lose a good servant; but great care must be taken as to the quantity and quality of those supplies, or it will acquire a very bad master. He who fares sumptuously every day, and makes each meal a full and luxurious one, may, after any such meal, feel the force and energy of the above-cited description—"The corruptible body presseth down "the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down "the mind." The heat and heaviness caused in the body by repletion, induce, for the time, an uneasiness and dulness on the soul; nay, what is more extraordinary, even vitiate and deprave its taste. The intellectual, moral, or spiritual truths, which, after the light repast of the morning were relishing as the patriarch's savoury meat, are now become tasteless as the white of an egg. The man has contracted a temporary indifference, at least, if not an aversion towards every thing that is wise, and great, and good. His faculties are not equal to any thing higher than a newspaper, or a novel, or a conversation more trifling than either; and a very few sentences in a religious

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way would infallibly send him to sleep. In short, there is not more difference between any two men, than between the same man when full and when fasting.

To say, with a celebrated physician, that no Englishman has an idea of temperance, would be saying too much: but we shall say no more than the truth, perhaps, when we say, that most of us are frequently wanting in many degrees of that self-denial which is so powerfully recommended and enforced upon us, by the preceding consideration, and which would conduce no less to the health and comfort of our bodies, than to the improvement and welfare of our minds.

The reciprocal influence of the soul and body on each other, has been largely demonstrated by modern philosophers; but they have been far too hasty in concluding from thence, that the soul, as well as the body, is material. There are arguments sufficient to evince them distinct beings, with different powers, though capable of exerting a mutual influence on each other. There is no absurdity in supposing them so to do. That they cannot exert such a mutual influence, allowing them to be distinct substances, is a negative, which never has been, nor ever can be proved. But an inference of great weight and importance to the conduct of mankind may be drawn from the circumstance of this reciprocal influence, namely, that we should labour, on the one hand, by temperance and abstinence, to preserve the body in that state which may produce a benign and kindly influence on the soul; and, on the other, to fill the soul with such ideas, sentiments, and affections, as

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may produce a like benign and kindly influence on the body. In general the practice of mankind, alas! is exactly the reverse. They indulge passions in the soul, which destroy the health of the body; and introduce distempers into the body, which clog and obstruct the faculties of the soul.

But the difficulties and hardships to be encountered in a course of self-denial, it will still be said, perhaps, are very discouraging. The objection may be in some measure obviated by a

Fourth argument on its behalf, deduced from the examples frequently set us by the men of the world.

Our blessed Master has observed, that "the children of this world are in their generation *wiser* than "the children of light." It may be said with equal truth, that they have generally more *zeal*, more *fortitude*, more *patience* and *perseverance*. There is not a votary of wealth, pleasure, power, or fame, who cannot, and who does not, upon occasion, practise a self-denial, which few Christians can be prevailed to practise in a much better cause; a self-denial more severe and rigid, indeed, than *they* are often called upon to practise.

For the sake of collecting what is never to be used, and adding to his beloved heap, the miser will forego the comforts, the conveniences, and almost the necessaries of existence, and voluntarily submit all his days to the penances and austerities of a mendicant.

The discipline of a life in fashion is by no means of the mildest kind; and it is common to meet with those who complain of being worn down, and ready to sink under it. But how can they help it? What

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can they do? They are driven and compelled to it; they are fast bound by the adamantine chains of a *necessity*—not *philosophical* indeed—but one equally inexorable and irresistible.

Consider the vigils and the abstinence of the gamester. To discharge with propriety the duties of his profession, it is expedient that he keep his habit cool, and his head clear. His diet is therefore almost as spare as that of St. John in the wilderness; and he drinks neither wine nor strong drink, lest, instead of his cheating his friend, his friend should cheat him.

Consider the toil and the fatigue willingly undergone by one whose delight is placed in the sports of the field, and the pleasures of the chase. How early does he rise! How late is he abroad! "In hunger "and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and rain. "None of these things move him, neither counts he "his life dear unto himself," being well content often to put it to the extremest hazard.

Look at the aspirant to power. He wears a countenance always suited to the present occasion. No symptom of inward uneasiness is suffered to appear in it. He holds his passions in the most absolute subjection. "Hitherto," says he to every one of them, "shalt thou come, but no farther." He takes patiently and cheerfully affronts and insults. He bears and forbears. Can the *Stoic*, can the inhabitant of *le Trappe*, do more? Exemplary instances of mortification and self-denial are not confined to the desert or to the cloister. They may be found in a court.

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How often does the candidate for literary fame pursue his proposition, or his problem, or his system, regardless of food and rest, till his eyes fail, his nerves are shattered, his spirits are exhausted, and his health is gone! But greater things than these are still behind.

At the call of honour, a young man of family and fortune, accustomed to the gratifications of the table, and a life of ease and voluptuousness, quits every valuable and tender connexion at home, and submits at once to all the painful duties and hard fare of a camp in an enemy's country. He travels through dreary swamps and inhospitable forests, guided only by the track of savages. He traverses mountains, he passes and repasses rivers, and marches several hundred miles, with scarcely bread to eat or change of raiment to put on. When night comes he sleeps on the ground, or, perhaps, sleeps not at all; and at the dawn of day resumes his labour. At length, he is so fortunate as to find his enemy. He braves death, amid all the horrors of the field. He sees his companions fall around him—he is wounded, and carried into a tent, or laid in a waggon, where he is left to suffer pain and anguish, with the noise of destruction sounding in his ears. After some weeks, he recovers, and enters afresh upon duty.——And does the Captain of thy salvation, O thou who stylest thyself the soldier and servant of Jesus Christ—does he require any thing like this at thy hands? Or canst thou deem him an austere master, because thou art enjoined to live in sobriety and purity, to subdue a turbulent passion, to watch an hour some-

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times unto prayer, or to miss a meal now and then, during the season of repentance and humiliation? Blush for shame, and hide thy face in the dust!

More strange and inexcusable still will this conduct of the Christian appear, when we consider, in the

Fifth and last place, the rewards annexed to the practice of self-denial.

Many and great are its advantages in the present life. The lightness of spirits, the cheerfulness of heart, the serenity of temper, the alacrity of mind, the vigour of understanding, the obedience of the will, the freedom from bad desires, and the propensity to good ones, produced by a prudent and judicious abstinence, are inconceivable by those who have never experienced them, and fully justify, to those who have experienced them, the highest encomiums pronounced by the ancient fathers of the church on this evangelical precept, and the blessedness of observing it. For think not that the felicity, any more than the virtue, of man, consists in gratifying at all times his own humour, and following his own will; since his humour is perverse, and his will depraved. We are, in very deed, the oldest of us, children, wayward children; and unless we would be miserable as well as vicious, we must treat ourselves as we do our children. Now, "compare the child that is "taught submission and obedience, with him that "is humoured in every thing. How rational, cheer-"ful, agreeable, and happy is the one! How ri-"diculous, peevish, disagreeable, and unhappy is "the other! The smallest favour done the first, is

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"received and acknowledged as a particular obliga-
"tion: the greatest kindness done to the other, is
"either rejected with disdain, or received with thank-
"less ill-manners. The more you strive to please
"him, the more difficult he is to be pleased; till
"at length nothing will satisfy or oblige him, be-
"cause he hath been obliged in all things.—Betimes,
"therefore, accustom your desires, like children, to
"*disappointments*. Deny them every thing they ask
"for, that is *improper* for them to obtain; nay, every
"thing (be it what it may) which they ask for in an
"*improper manner*. This will be so far from sour-
"ing the temper (as some have weakly suggested in
"the case of children), that it will give you, as well
"as them, a confirmed habit of acquiescing in what
"is right; of cheerfully submitting, when your wills
"are over-ruled; of receiving every thing with plea-
"sure and gratitude, in which you are indulged;
"above all, of controlling every sudden passion that
"may arise; of commanding and moderating every
"desire; of resigning to the appointments of Provi-
"dence, through every situation and period of life."
And if this be not happiness, say, where it is to be found, and where is the place thereof?—It is the happiness of a hero, the joy and the glory of a conqueror, returning from the field of battle triumphant through grace, and dragging the enemies of his salvation fast bound to his chariot-wheels. When self-denial has thus wrought its perfect work within you, the kingdom of heaven is there—and that kingdom is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

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But self-denial will not only thus bring down heaven to you for a time—it will carry you up to heaven for ever. Let us revert to the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and consider well the promises there made to those holy and happy tempers peculiar to Christianity, the essence of all which is self-denial; and let us observe the manner in which the reward is adapted and appropriated to each several temper.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the "kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; "for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; "for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they "which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; "for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful; "for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure "in heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the "peace-makers; for they shall be called the children "of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted "for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of "heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, "and persecute you, and shall say all manner of "evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, "and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in "heaven."

The Saviour's promise is sufficient—But would you hear the testimony of one who viewed its accomplishment? You shall hear it—

"I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no "man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, "and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, "and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, "and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud

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"voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon "the throne, and unto the Lamb: blessing and "glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, "and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever "and ever. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in "white robes, and whence came they? And I said "unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto "me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made "them white, in the blood of the Lamb."—These "are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, "the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, "the afflicted, and the persecuted."—These are they, who, in the days of their flesh, "denied "themselves, took up their cross daily and followed "Jesus" in the way that leadeth unto life; that way on which "the Lord hath promised his *blessing*, "even life for evermore."

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DISCOURSE II.

THE DUTY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS.

LUKE, IX. 23.

If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me.

THAT instrument on which, among the Romans, malefactors were condemned to suffer an ignominious and painful death, became a sign or symbol of all that is afflicting and tormenting, vexatious or disagreeable, whether to the body or the mind of man. The utmost torture and anguish were expressed by the noun *cruciatus*, the infliction of them by the verb *crucio*.

As the punishment alluded to was not in use among the Jews, they must have borrowed the expressions from the Romans; unless, as some learned men think, they had been received before from the Persians, who, it is said, were accustomed to fix criminals to some kind of cross. Such application of the word is common, I believe, to most of the modern languages of Europe. In our own, we denote all events adverse and unpleasing by the general term of *crosses*.

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Since the time when the Son of God, by suffering on the cross, for the sins of the world, exalted it to a dignity above the thrones and diadems of princes, on which it was soon portrayed as their greatest ornament and highest glory, the word became one of mighty import in the Christian system, of which the doctrine, discipline, and duties, all range under its banner.

When our Lord pronounced the passage selected for my text, he, no doubt, intended to signify by what death he himself should die; and withal to intimate, that, besides the manifold persecutions his apostles were to undergo for his sake, some of them should even literally be conformed to him in the manner of their leaving the world; which accordingly came to pass. It seems impossible to reflect upon this wonderful and characteristic circumstance respecting the ever-blessed Founder of our religion, as Grotius has well observed, without supposing that Plato must have been under a degree of divine impulse, when he closed the account of his righteous man who should appear at some future day, upon the earth, by predicting, that, "after having suffered all other "ills, he should at length be *fixed to a cross*."

To understand the phrase of *taking up* and *bearing the cross*, it must be recollected, that, upon the infliction of this punishment, the criminal was obliged to *take up the cross*, and *bear it*, on his shoulders, to the place of execution.

Our Lord's declaration shall be considered, in the following discourse, as general, and made to all his disciples. We shall state the grounds on which the

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duty is founded; and point out the manner in which it may be best performed.

It may appear difficult, at first sight, to comprehend the goodness of God in afflicting us, or commanding us to afflict ourselves. Could not he render us holy, without rendering us miserable, by way of preparative? Doubtless, he could have done it; and he could have produced all men, as he created the first man, at their full growth; but his wisdom has seen it fit, that we should pass through the pains and hazards of infancy and youth, in the latter instance, and, in the former, that through tribulation and affliction we would enter into his heavenly kingdom. It is his will; and therefore, though no reasons could be assigned, silence and submission would best become us.—But there are many.

For it is obvious to remark, in the first place, that Christianity did not bring afflictions into the world with it; it found them already there. The world is full of them. The misery of man is a theme on which philosophers and historians, orators and poets, have expatiated from age to age; nor is it yet by any means exhausted. The wealthy and the great, the men of business and the men of pleasure, have discovered no method of exemption. In every profession, every station, nay, in every individual, there is a something, which, at all times, damps all enjoyments, and imbitters the cup of life. Men are disquieted either by the tempers of others, or their own; by their sins, or by their follies; by sickness of body, or sorrow of heart. Many, instead of becoming better by their sufferings, are made worse; they murmur,

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they rebel, they rage, they despair, and the torments of time lead on to those of eternity. Such is the state of things in the world. Let us reflect,

Secondly, how it came to be so, and we shall find still less cause of complaint. The misery of man proceeded not originally from God; he brought it upon himself. "God formed him upright;" and, while upright, happy; but he "sought out inven-" tions," he followed his own imaginations, and became miserable. What the wise man says of death, is equally true of affliction; "God made it not, neither "hath he pleasure in the destruction," nor the suffering "of the living. For he created all things, that "they might have their being, and the generations "of the world were healthful, and there was no "poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of "death upon the earth; for righteousness is immor-"tal—But ungodly men, with their works and words, "called it to them." You see how exactly this harmonizes with the doctrine of the apostle; "death"—and, in like manner, trouble "came upon all men, "for that all had sinned." Whatever, therefore, our sufferings may be, we suffer no more than we deserve; we must bow down under the mighty hand of God; we must kiss the rod, exclaiming, in the words of Nehemiah, "Thou art just, O Lord, in all that is "brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we "have done wickedly[a]."

The Scriptures inform us, that by one man's transgression moral evil entered into the world;

[a] Nehem. ix. 33.

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death and every other kind of natural evil entered with it. To find our way through all the mazes of that labyrinth of disputation which the subject has occasioned, may be difficult; to explain clearly and unexceptionably every particular in that concise history given us by Moses, may not be easy: but the fact is sufficient, related in the Old Testament, acknowledged and built upon in the New. And it is the only clew that can unravel, the only key that can open, every thing. Grasp it firmly, and suffer no man, either by fraud or force, to wrest it from you. Without it, all is dark and inexplicable. You will be driven, either to deny there can be a wise and gracious God who governs the world, which is the madness of the Epicureans; or, to affirm that evil is good, which is the absurdity of the Stoics.

But though it be most undoubtedly an absurdity to call evil good, there is no absurdity in holding, that good may be brought out of evil. Natural evil may be converted into a remedy for moral evil, which gave it birth. Sin produced sorrow; and sorrow may contribute, in some measure, to do away sin. That the crosses we meet, the pains and the troubles we suffer through life, are by the providence of God intended, and by his grace rendered effectual, for this purpose shall be our

Third observation; and I am confident it will give full satisfaction and rest to your minds, as touching the matter in discussion.

From what we feel in ourselves, and what we see and hear of others, every person, who has thought at all upon the subject, must have been convinced,

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that, circumstanced as we are, "it is good for us to "be afflicted." Naturally, man is inclined to pride and wrath, to intemperance and impurity, to selfishness and worldly-mindedness; desirous to acquire more, and unwilling to part with any thing. Before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven, he must become humble and meek, temperate and pure, disinterested and charitable, resigned, and prepared to part with all. The great instrument employed by Heaven to bring about this change in him, is the cross. Affliction will make him humble and meek, by showing him how poor and weak a creature he is, and how little reason he has to be proud, or to be angry; it will render him temperate and pure, by withdrawing the fuel which has nourished and inflamed base lusts; it will cause him to become disinterested and charitable, as teaching him, by his own sufferings, to sympathize with his suffering brethren, and to grant that relief, which he perceives himself to want; he will die to the world, which is already dead to him, and live to God, in whom alone he finds every blessing and comfort. Contented and resigned, he will have but one wish—"to depart, and to be with "Christ."

Such is the process which, at different times, and in different manners, must take place in us. The maladies to be healed are inveterate, and not without much difficulty eradicated. The process, therefore, must be long, and it must be painful; but there is good reason for it: the corruption of our nature makes it necessary, and is the real cause of the pain we endure in the operation. The surgeon applies

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not the knife where the flesh is sound; but when it is otherwise, the application must be made, and made in proportion to the depth of the wound, and the danger of a mortification. In such case, is it cruelty in him, when he cuts to the quick? No; it is affection, it is skill; it is the manner in which he would treat his only son. Does the father hate his child, whom he chastises? No; it is the best proof he can show of his love. So saith our heavenly Father of his children: "Whom the Lord loveth he "chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he re-"ceiveth[b]."

In this light, then, are we to view the troubles of life; not only those of the more notorious and heavier kind, as poverty and persecution, sickness, pain, and the loss of persons who are dearest to us; but those also which are of less moment, and pass in secret, unobserved by the world; the little rubs and vexations arising from the ingratitude and froward dispositions of others, the conflict of passions in our own minds, or that languor, that *tædium vitæ*, as it is called, which destroys the relish of our enjoyments, and even of life itself. All these, which constitute the *daily* cross mentioned in the text, are designed to cure the surfeit of prosperity; to intimate, that earth is not the seat of unmingled and permanent happiness, that here we have no abiding city, but expect, and should seek after one, to come.

[b] How finely is this touched by the hand of our great poet—
"Consideration, like an angel, came,
"And whipt th' offending Adam out of him."

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Nothing happens without the providence of God. Known unto him are all his works from the beginning. He created all, he governs all, and to every thing he has given to be what it is. He numbers the hairs of our heads, the leaves of the wood, the grains of sand upon the shore, and the drops that compose the mighty ocean; each atom, at the creation was measured and weighed by his eternal wisdom. Acquainted with the state and temper of every person, and having the whole chain of events before him, he has prepared a series of them, to detach us, by degrees, from the world, and from ourselves; to train us, by a holy and salutary discipline, for better things; to hew and to polish us as precious stones, that shall have place in his celestial temple. And he has allotted to every man *his* cross, his own cross, that cross which is proper for him, and best calculated to effect in *him* so great and beneficent a purpose. Let him first consider what it is, and then "take it "up, and bear it." To point out, in few words, the manner in which this may best be done, shall employ the remainder of our time.

When our Lord was led forth to be crucified, the Jews, we are told, laid hold on "one Simon, a Cyre-"nian, coming out of the country; and on him they "laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus." This stranger seems designed to appear upon this occasion, as the representative of us all, exhibiting in his person, thus loaded with the cross, or a part of it, the very same instruction conveyed by our Lord himself in the words of the text; "let him take up his "cross and follow me:" we are to follow him, to tread

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in his steps, and, conformed to his example in suffering, conform ourselves to it likewise in the manner of bearing those sufferings.

The very consideration, that we are following him, will direct us to do it as becomes us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, going before us, and suffering so much for us, himself perfectly innocent, we cannot think it much that we should suffer something, who are in so many ways guilty. "If these things be done to the green tree" —if the axe be laid to the root of the verdant and fruitful tree of life itself—"what shall be done to the "dry?" what can the sapless and barren wood expect, but to be for burning, and fuel for fire?

When a man groans under the iron rod of oppression, or, cast down upon the bed of sickness, feels his bones to be filled with pain, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; when he endeavours to recollect some passage of Scripture, wherewith to solace and support his weary soul; perhaps there is nothing that will cause more light and comfort to break in upon him, than frequently to repeat and meditate upon that humble acknowledgement, made by the poor penitent from the cross on one side of his Saviour, and addressed to his reprobate companion on the other—"Dost not thou fear God, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And "we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward "of our deeds, but THIS man hath done nothing "amiss." At this thought, love of the Redeemer will spring up in his mind; and to love nothing is

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irksome; it will make "his yoke easy and his burden "light."

In every path and every period of life, the cross will meet us; it will be found lying before us; by mean compliances, by transgressing or neglecting our duty, we may turn out of the road, and avoid it; through wilful blindness and obstinacy, we may stumble over it and fall. Our Lord took up *his*, and bore it while strength remained; let us do likewise.

It should be borne in a spirit of submission and resignation, without complaining or murmuring. "Attend to the rod, and to him who hath appointed "it;" consider well the latter, and you will entertain right ideas of the former. "The cup which my "*Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—"Not *my* will, but *thine* be done."

Resignation to God should be accompanied with meekness towards men, who may be the instruments of our sufferings, for they are only instruments, in the hands of their Maker and ours; and whether the instruments employed be animate or inanimate, a Christian sees it equally absurd to discharge his anger against them. "Let him alone, let him curse, "because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse[c]," exclaimed David of Shimei. "Thou couldest have "no power at all against me, except it were given "thee from above," said a greater than David to his unjust judge. Knowing this, therefore, "when

[c] 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

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"he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he "suffered, he threatened not; but committed him-"self to him that judgeth righteously[d]." Spotless and silent, he was led a lamb to the slaughter.

Meekness is not at all incompatible with fortitude, which is necessary to carry us through, that we may not faint in our minds, and fail, before the end of our sufferings.—Behold the man! He comes forth, with the purple robe and the crown of thorns, into the midst of the hostile and furious multitude, unmoved by the scoffs of apostate priests and the insults of an infidel rabble; undaunted by all the efforts of evil men and evil spirits; unappalled at the sight of that cross on which he was to "taste death "for every man." He is mocked, spit upon, stripped, scourged, and nailed to the fatal tree. Patient and decided, firm and recollected, he commends his spirit to the Father, in words which recognised and substantiated an ancient prophecy concerning him; and then, as the last token of obedience, bows his head and dies.

Charity is always glorious; but never appears more so, than when shining forth from a dark cloud of affliction: when it evinces, that our thoughts are not so engrossed by our own sufferings, as to forget those of others; when we are not unmindful to perform the last kind offices to those about us; when our latest breath is spent in comforting our relations and friends, and praying for our enemies. Thus the dying patriarchs of old called for their

[d] 1 Pet. ii. 23.

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children, and left with them the monitions and benedictions of Heaven: and thus He of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, to the women who followed him wailing, "Daughters "of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your-"selves, and your children"—to the blessed Virgin, and the beloved disciple, standing under the cross; "Woman, behold thy son—Behold thy mother"—of the Jews who crucified him; "Father, forgive "them, for they know not what they do."

These are the virtues, these the triumphs, of the CROSS!

But perhaps you will ask, "Who is sufficient for "these things?" The answer received by St. Paul, applies to every one of us; "My grace is sufficient for "thee." *That* will enable us to look through "the "sufferings of the present time," to the "glory that "shall be revealed," and to wonder that we make any account of the one, while we believe in the other. Faith shows us heaven opened, and Jesus, who was crucified, standing at the right hand of the majesty there; it shows us a long and goodly train of those who once carried their crosses, but are "now crown-"ed, and receive palms from the Son of God, whom "they," formerly, *thus* "confessed in the world."

It is said of our blessed Lord himself, that, "for "the joy which was set before him, he endured the "cross, despising the shame," esteeming both the pain and the ignominy as nothing, in respect to the reward that should follow.

The misfortune is, that, in viewing these objects, we hold the glass, and turn the perspective; the

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joys of another world are driven off to a distance, and diminished; the evils of this are brought near and magnified. How much otherwise do things appear in the sight of God! To us one day may seem a thousand years: to him "a thousand "years are but as one day." A little more, or a little less, of pain or pleasure; a life longer or shorter, by a few years—are differences which disappear at once in the presence of eternity. Say, that, at some time within these last hundred years, two friends died, the one twenty years before the other. To the survivor that interval seemed long and tedious; to us, now looking back upon the whole, it seems trifling; and more so to them: they are met again, and no trace of it is to be seen. A sick man, who passes a night without sleep, thinks that night to be without end; but the night, in reality, is no longer than another: and when it is gone, he himself will be convinced of it. Life rolls along like a torrent. The past is no more than a dream; the present, when we think we have fast hold of it, slips through our hands, and mingles with the past; and let us not vainly imagine, that the future will be of another quality; it will glide by with the same rapidity. You have seen the waves of the ocean pressing each other to the shore. You then beheld an emblem of human life; days, months, and years, crowd forward, in like manner. Yet a little while, yet a few moments, and all will be at an end. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the "things which are not seen are eternal."

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DISCOURSE III.

THE NECESSITY OF RISING WITH CHRIST.

COLOSSIANS, III. 1, 2.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

THERE are few persons who have not often employed their thoughts on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. The fact is extraordinary, and well attested; the circumstances striking and affecting. The trembling of the earth, the descent of the angel, the removal of the stone, the terror of the guard, and the different appearances of the Saviour to his disciples; all inspire a mixture of reverential awe and heartfelt delight.

As a consequence of this resurrection, it naturally occurs to our minds, that since Christ is risen, we shall arise too; because he arose that we might do the same. The members must be joined to the head; and the harvest will of course follow the first fruits.

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This is clear. But there is another consequence, which perhaps may not so much and so frequently engage our attention as it ought to do. "I know," says Martha, speaking of her dead brother—"I "know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at "the last day." We all can say this respecting our deceased friends and ourselves. We are ready to say it. But what is to become of us; what is likely to be our portion, when we shall have thus risen? For we may rise either to salvation or to condemnation. To escape the one and obtain the other, some work must be wrought, some change must be effected in us before we die, which in Scripture is likewise described as a resurrection. The apostle, you have heard in the text, addressing his Colossian converts in this style, "If ye then be risen with "Christ." But how "risen with Christ?" They had not been dead, and therefore they could not have risen from the dead. *That* resurrection, the resurrection of the body, was not past; it was not to come for many ages: it is not yet come. The resurrection intended was to take place in persons that were living upon earth. This intermediate link of the chain we are but too apt to leave out in our calculations; or, at least, to think very slightly and sparingly of it, though it be indeed of the utmost importance. For what will it avail us to rise from the dead, only to hear the sentence, "Depart from "me, ye wicked?"

Often have we bestowed some reflections on the information communicated by the Gospel of the day concerning that which has been done *for* us: let us

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at this time employ our meditations on the direction given us by the epistle, as touching that which is to be done *in* us. Let us take into consideration the *nature* of the change spoken of under the idea of a resurrection; the *evidence* of it in the transfer of our affections; and the *objects* on which those affections are to be placed.

I. "If ye then be risen with Christ"—The words evidently imply, that, in consequence of Christ's resurrection, some operation had been already wrought, some change had already passed upon the persons here addressed; an operation and a change, bearing some resemblance, some analogy to those which had been wrought and passed in the body of our Lord: "If ye be RISEN with Christ;" if ye have risen from the dead, together with him.—Now, since no such change had as yet passed on their bodies, the change intended must have passed upon the other part of their composition, their souls; *these* must, in some sense, have risen from the dead; previously to which, they must have been in a state of death, or they never could have risen from the dead.

The very mention of the words *dead*, and *death*, has, doubtless, already brought to your remembrance several passages in Holy Writ, where expressions of a like sort occur:—"You being dead "in your sins;" dead in trespasses and sins; "she "that liveth in pleasure is dead, while she liveth;" "arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee "light;" with many others.

Nothing can paint in stronger colours the nature of sin, than do these texts, which, by styling it *death*,

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lead us necessarily to conceive of the one by the other. The sinner, like the dead man, neither sees, nor hears, nor tastes, nor feels, as he ought to do were he alive to God, and had he his "senses exer-" cised to discern good and evil:" he is incapable of motion and action, in a moral acceptation of the terms, that is, of making any progress toward heaven, or performing any good upon earth; "neither "is there any breath in his mouth;" the Spirit of the Almighty has forsaken him, and he is become, as it were, a corpse, fit only to be carried forth and laid in the pit of darkness and corruption.—Such, in the sight of God, is the greatest, and the richest, and the gayest, and the wittiest, and the wisest man of the world, without religion; buried in sensuality and unbelief, he lieth in the grave, death gnaweth him, and the worm that never dieth is feeding upon him.

Now to raise such a one from the dead, to restore him to life; to cause him to see the things which belong to his peace, the Sun of righteousness, and the glories of his throne; to hear the words of eternal salvation; to taste the good things of the world to come; to feel the terrors of judgement, and the comforts of mercy; to inspire into him the breath of heaven, that he may speak in purity, in truth, and in charity, as "the Spirit gives him utter-" ance;" to call him forth, like *Lazarus* in his grave-clothes, that he may walk in the way of God's commandments, and sit down at the table with his Lord—this is a work, which requires power more than human. Thus to rise *with* Christ, can be granted only *by* Christ.

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And, indeed, to procure it, was the design of his exaltation on the cross; "I, if I be lifted up," said he, signifying what death he should die, "will draw "all men unto me." The virtue of his death, and the consequent "power of his resurrection" (as the apostle styles it), compose a divine magnetical influence (if one may use the expression), which is to act upon the mass of mankind, and draw them upwards from the earth. It acts in a due and appointed order, first upon their souls, and afterwards upon their bodies. The soul, a native of heaven, had it continued pure and upright, as it came from the hands of the Creator, would still have looked and wished to return thither. But an alteration happened, which is wonderfully marked in that line of the heathen satyrist—

O CURVÆ in *terras* animæ, et *cælestium* inanes!

The human mind has been warped from its original attitude, bent and bowed down to the love and care of earthly things, and rendered destitute of noble and heavenly thoughts and aims. This is the spiritual death of the Scriptures, which has induced the necessity of a spiritual resurrection. And as the death of the body flowed from the same source of original transgression, a resurrection of *that* likewise must follow in due time. "This is the will of him that "sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and "believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I "will raise him up at the last day[a]." By the union

[a] John. vi. 40.

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of body and soul, it was not intended, that the former should depress the latter, but that the latter should exalt the former. The resurrection of the one from sin to righteousness, is succeeded by that of the other from death to life eternal: and thus it is that the Saviour completely fulfils his promise; "When "I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." That we should first "rise with Christ," in the sense which has now, it is hoped, been sufficiently explained, is, you see, a necessary and leading point. We are next to consider the sign and proof of such our resurrection.

II. A change of this kind being of so much consequence, it must be a desirable thing for us to learn on what evidence we may rest assured that such a change has passed upon us. On this head we are instructed by the words following; for whether they be rendered, as our translators have rendered them, in the imperative—"Seek those things which are "above," or, as they may be rendered, in the indicative, "Ye do seek those things which are above," it will come to the same. He who is risen with Christ, seeks, or ought to seek, the things which are above; it will be the effect, it will be the proof, of such his resurrection.

For to "seek," or make search, implies, 1. that a person is alive. A dead man, as he knows nothing, can desire nothing; and as he desires nothing, he can seek after nothing.

2. It implies not only life, but motion, the sure sign and exertion of life. No one, who is alive and awake, will continue motionless, as if he were dead:

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the same spirit which causes him to live, will excite him to move. When the apostle says, "In him "(that is, in God) we live," he adds immediately, "and move." The Christian life is not a life of indolence: *that*, if it be not death, is the way that leads to it. A true Christian is active and zealous, always thinking, speaking, or performing something for the honour of God or the good of man. But,

3. Seeking or making search, if done as it should be, with a desire and resolution to *find*, implies more than mere motion and activity; it implies, labour, diligence, perseverance. Nothing valuable is to be obtained without these, even in the present world; much less are the wonders and the rewards of eternity. It is possible to seek as Pilate did, who asked, "What is truth?" but never waited for an answer. We may seek carelessly; or begin well, and in a little time grow weary, and give over; or we may seek in a formal manner, without love of that which is sought; and therefore a search in earnest, and one that deserves the name, implies,

4. A relish and affection for the thing sought, which cannot be possessed by a person who is dead. After that which we do not affect, we shall never long take the trouble to seek. Our apostle to the words, "Seek those things which are above," subjoins, "Set your affections on things above, not on "things on the earth." The Greek word here used for, "set your affections," is one of very extensive meaning: "it comprehends the actions and opera-"tions both of the *understanding* and the *will;*" and cannot be fully translated by any one English word;

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φρονειτε[b], *sapite, understand, mind, relish, affect,* those things which are above. Wisdom, which is the mental faculty of rightly discerning and distinguishing between one thing and another, resembles that bodily sense residing in the palate, and perceiving the different taste and flavour of the various kinds of food; and it is very observable, that in the three languages of *Hebrew, Greek,* and *Latin,* the same term is used for both; טעם in the first, φρονειν in the second, *sapere* in the last. "Set your affections on "things which are above;" acquire such a knowledge of them, as may incite you to relish, to regard, to attend, to search after them more and more, as the objects of your love, desire, and affection. All this complication of meaning seems involved in the one word, φρονειτε. And therefore how diligent and industrious, how ardent and persevering ought we to be in the search thus enjoined by the apostle! Certainly the man of the world should never be suffered to outstrip and put us to the blush, by their pursuits after honour, pleasure, or wealth. Beautiful is the exhortation of the wise man; which each person may regard as if addressed to himself: "My son, if thou "wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments "with thee; so that thou incline thine ear to wisdom, "and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if "thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy "voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as sil-"ver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures;

[b] Leigh in Parkhurst.

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"then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, "and find the knowledge of God[c]."

We shall be greatly quickened in this our search, if we consider the apostle's account of the things to be sought, or the objects of our search, namely, "the "things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand "of God."

III. To be exalted above others in place and power upon earth, is the too general wish of all. From the parabolical discourse of Jotham we learn, that even the bramble was not exempt from it. And during the abode of Christ upon earth, we read of one, who desired for her two sons, that they might sit, one on the right hand, the other on the left, in his temporal kingdom, which was then imagined to be near its establishment. Such, however, was not the nature of our Lord's kingdom, or of the promotion to be obtained in it. He himself is seated at the right hand; but it is "the right hand of the Majesty "in the *heavens*;" thither must his disciples look for their exaltation. We may say of the Creator, in a more elevated sense than that intended by the Latin poet,

> Os homini *sublime* dedit, *cœlumque* tueri
> Jussit——

This is a holy ambition, to which no bounds need to be set; worthy a princely progeny, a royal race, the sons of God, those eagles that can ascend the

[c] Prov. ii. 1. et seq.

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heights of the sky, and contemplate the brightness of the meridian sun. "Why seek ye the living "among the dead?" Our Lord, our Redeemer, the object of all our hope and all our delight, "is not "*here;* he is risen; he is gone up on high;" he is upon his throne; he "sitteth at the right hand of "God."

The attitude denotes *rest;* the place, *honour.* And what can we wish for more than these?

The attitude, that of *sitting*, denotes *rest.* Such it was to our blessed Lord himself. His life on earth was a life of labour; he looked not for rest till his labours were at an end. His days were passed in going about to do good among men; his nights, in thinking of them, and praying for them: often, indeed, he "had not where to lay his head." By taking our nature upon him, he submitted to its inconveniences and troubles, its sorrows and its pains: he laboured, and then he rested from his labours.

In time we shall do the same; but the time is not yet. The sad effects and consequences of sin are still in the world, and lie heavy upon it. "The "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain to-"gether until now;" and we groan and travail with it: we ourselves, though redeemed by Christ, and favoured with his grace, that we may be enabled to support our miseries; we have, and upon earth ever shall have, miseries to support, and those miseries increasing, as we draw nearer to our dissolution. All things are full of labour and sorrow, without us and within us: without are the incessant toils of life, the

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hurry and the bustle of the world; within are cares and fears: business fatigues mankind much; but when they have no business, they suffer more from their own thoughts. Their pursuits are often vanity; their disappointments produce vexation; and from the consideration of both, how many daily become a prey to gloom and melancholy!

On these and many other accounts, which need not be mentioned (for experience will too soon teach the youngest among you), the state of a Christian in this life is by the Scriptures represented under that of a mariner in a tempest, longing for a sight of the haven; of a soldier in camp, desiring to hear of peace, and to receive a final discharge from his warfare; of a labourer, bearing in the field the burden and heat of the day, waiting impatiently for the cool and comfortable evening, which shall release him, and send him home to quiet and repose. Hence the great object pointed out to us is *rest;* we are directed to consider, and derive consolation and encouragement, during our labours, from the consideration of that rest of God himself, after his work of creation; that of his people in Canaan, after their sojournings in the wilderness; and that of Christ, after his toilsome life and painful death. We are assured, there still *remaineth a rest,* the fulness and accomplishment of all others, for the people of God in heaven, when their labours likewise shall have been terminated upon earth. And we hear, under both Testaments, the aspirations of holy persons after it, complaining that they dwell with Mesech; that their sojournings are prolonged; praying for the wings of

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a dove, that they may fly away to it; desiring to depart, and to be with Christ; weary of things, even the best things below; and seeking earnestly the things above, where he *sitteth*.

Let us not, however, when we think of this rest, think of it as a mere negative state, as a state of dull sleep and insensibility. It is a rest attended with pleasure; the rest of a weary flock in green pastures, beside the waters of comfort; Eden blooms anew, with its tree and its rivers; the Lamb leads his followers to living fountains of waters—of waters flowing from the throne of God, and consequently impregnated with all the blessings and glories of eternity.

I say *glories*, as well as blessings; for as the attitude in which our Lord is described by the apostle, that of *sitting*, denotes *rest;* by the place, "the "right hand of God," is denoted *honour:* the former promises the blessings of his peace; the latter, the glories of his kingdom.

Rest and honour, among men, are not often companions. Disquietude attends height of character, rank, and station, both in the pursuit, lest it should not be attained, and in the possession, lest it should be lost again. But of the honour which cometh from God this cannot be said. It is always bestowed on the penitent, the humble, and the faithful servant of his heavenly Master; and when bestowed, can no more be taken from him. The crown is immortal as the Donor of it. "When the breath of man," on which depends all sublunary fame, "goeth forth, "he turneth again to his earth; and then all his

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"thoughts"—those of the giver, as well as those of the receiver—"perish. Blessed therefore is he," and he only, "who hath the God of Jacob for "his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his "God."

To describe the blessings of rest and peace in the kingdom of our Lord, images are borrowed from the scenes of rural and pastoral life. To give us ideas of its glories, its majesty, and magnificence—a throne is set in heaven, encompassed by a rainbow; and one is seen upon it, like a jasper or a sardine; seven lamps burn before it; lightnings and thunders proceed from it; four-and-twenty venerable personages appear clothed in white; they rise from their seats, and fall prostrate at the foot of the throne; when a chorus is heard of all creatures both in heaven and earth, singing glory to the Lamb triumphant!—Elsewhere, a city is exhibited, new Jerusalem, built of gold and precious stones; that is, in the prophetical language of Isaiah, its walls salvation, and its gates praise; the Lord God and the Lamb constitute its temple; from whence it is illuminated by a splendour, far exceeding, and rendering needless, the light of the sun and of the moon; the streets resounding with the hallelujahs of its blest inhabitants.

These are some of "the things above," on which the apostle exhorts us to "set our affections." I am sure, you all think them worthy of your very best and warmest affections. May the consideration of them produce that effect, which a *due* consideration of them *must* produce. May they who have me-

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glected to seek them—if any such there be—now begin to seek them; and they who have always sought them, now seek them still more; thus receiving in themselves this most comfortable testimony, that they are "risen with Christ;" that their bodies, at the appointed time, shall arise; and both body and soul ascend to heaven after him, that "where he is, "they may be also."

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DISCOURSE IV.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

1 CORINTHIANS, IX. 24.

So run that ye may obtain.

MOST important was the *matter* by the apostles communicated to the world; the heavenly reward, and the way to obtain it. The *manner* of communication well deserves your notice and attention. It is not done in the dry didactic style. There is nothing dull and heavy. All is spirit, and all is life. Their ideas are clothed in such figures, as at once convince the understanding, strike the imagination, warm the heart, and excite the affections. It is impossible to continue cold and indifferent while we read their epistles. They look around on the various scenes of life, and the customs that prevail among those to whom they write. From these they select images calculated to convey with effect to the minds of their disciples, the doctrines which they wish to impress.

"The most splendid solemnities which ancient "history hath transmitted to us, were the Olympic "games. Historians, orators, and poets, abound with "references to them; and their sublimest imagery is "borrowed from these renowned exercises. The

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"games were solemnized every fifth year by an infi-
"nite concourse of people from almost all parts of
"the world. They were observed with the greatest
"pomp and magnificence: hecatombs of victims were
"slain in honour of the heathen deities, and Elis was
"a scene of universal festivity and joy. We find
"that the most formidable and opulent sovereigns of
"those times were competitors for the Olympic
"crown. We see the kings of Macedon, the tyrants
"of Sicily, the princes of Asia Minor, and at last
"the lords of imperial Rome and emperors of the
"world, entering their names among the candidates,
"and contending for the envied palm; judging their
"felicity completed, and the career of all human
"glory and greatness happily terminated, if they
"could but interweave the Olympic garland with the
"laurels they had purchased in the fields of war[a]."

No subject could be more familiar than this was to the minds of the Corinthians, who were besides so often spectators of similar games, celebrated upon the isthmus on which their city was situated, and from thence denominated Isthmian. With the greatest propriety therefore the verse of which my text is a part, is introduced by the words, *Know ye not*—"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, "but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may "obtain." For every citizen in Corinth was perfectly acquainted with each minute circumstance of this solemnity; a solemnity every way so splendid and

[a] Dr. Harwood's Introduction to the Study and Knowledge of the New Testament, vol. ii.

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pompous, that there was no danger lest the allusions made to it in this and other parts of the apostolical writings, should appear low and degrading. To unfold and display to you the truths and duties enveloped in such allusions, shall be the business of the following discourse, in the prosecution of which I shall be often obliged, and therefore here make my acknowledgements, one for all, to the afore-cited ingenious writer.

Let us therefore observe, in the first place, that the comparison evidently intimates the Christian life to be a state of action, of strenuous, unremitted, unwearied action.

The candidates who were to engage in the *stadium*, were brought to the barrier. There, duly arranged, they waited, in all the excesses of ardour and impatience, for the signal. When it was made, at once they sprung forward, and it is natural to imagine, with what rapidity they would urge their course, and stretch every nerve to reach the goal.

How finely does this circumstance illustrate that sublime passage in the Epistle to the Philippians[b]— "Not as though I had already attained, either were "already perfect; but I follow after, if I may appre- "hend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ "Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have ap- "prehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting "those things which are behind, and reaching forth "unto those things which are before, I press to- "ward the mark:" Τα μεν οπισω επιλανθανομενος, τοις δε

[b] Ch. iii. 12—14.

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εμπροσθεν επεκτεινομενος, επι σκοπον διωκω επι το βραβειον. Every term here employed by the apostle is *agonistical;* and the whole passage beautifully represents that ardour which fired the combatants when engaged in the race.

Thus again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews—"Let "us run with patience the race that is set before us," τον προκειμενον ημιν αγωνα.—Like those who ran in the Grecian stadium, let us urge our course, with unremitting ardour, towards the destined happy goal.

Once more, in the Second Epistle to Timothy, ch. iv. ver. 7.; "I have fought a good fight, I have finish-"ed my course:" τον αγωνα τον καλον ηγωνισμαι, τον δρομον τετελεκα.

Life then is a contest, a conflict, a race, a progress from one degree of wisdom and goodness to another; from the virtues of childhood to those of youth; from the virtues of youth to those of manhood; from the virtues of manhood to those of old age; even till, at the near prospect of our dissolution, we can say, each of us, with the apostle, "I "have fought a good fight, I have finished my "course." We must seek for rest and repose only in the arms of victory. While the race lasts, it is not a time to slumber and sleep, to loiter and be idle. Our competitors will pass us, and we shall lose all. Forgetting what is behind, we must still, still press forward, applying to ourselves in one case, what was said of a great commander in another,

Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.

Day by day we should improve; day by day we

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should examine ourselves, whether we have improved; what additional knowledge we have acquired; what additional good we have done; how we have performed our duty to our neighbour, to ourselves, to God that created and redeemed us, in public and in private. Upon these reviews, if carefully and faithfully made, how often should we find occasion to exclaim with that emperor, who, as a poet of our own observes, had been one without his crown, *Amici diem perdidi!*

The grand object, in short, under this head, is to warn you against the curse (and there cannot be a greater) of doing nothing; against the encroachments of that most fruitless and wretched of vices, *indolence*, whose reign, when once established, is generally for life; and the lamentable condition of whose unhappy votaries is thus described in a vision, by an elegant and masterly pen:

"There were some whose crime it was rather to "neglect reason than to disobey her; and who re-"treated from the heat and tumult of the way, not "to the bowers of intemperance, but to the maze of "indolence. They had this peculiarity in their con-"dition, that they were always in sight of the road, "always wishing to return, and always resolving to "return to-morrow. In these was most eminently "conspicuous the subtlety of habit, who hung imper-"ceptible shackles upon them, and was every mo-"ment leading them farther from the road, which "they always imagined they had the power of reach-"ing. They wandered on from one double of the

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"labyrinth to another, with the chains of habit "hanging secretly upon them, till, as they advanced, "the flowers grew paler, and the scents fainter. "They proceeded in their dreary march without "pleasure in their progress, yet without power to "return; and had this aggravation above all others, "that they were criminal, but not delighted. The "drunkard for a time laughed over his wine; the "ambitious man triumphed in the miscarriage of "his rival: but the captives of indolence had neither "superiority nor merriment. Discontent lowered "in their looks, and sadness hovered round their "shades; yet they crawled on reluctant and gloomy, "till they arrived at the depth of the recess, varied "only with poppies and night-shade, where the do-"minion of indolence terminates, and the hopeless "wanderer is delivered up to melancholy; the chains "of habit are rivetted for ever; and melancholy, "having tortured her prisoner for a time, consigns "him at last to the cruelty of despair."—But let us arise and go hence; let us leave the shocking scene; let us never forget that the Christian life is a state of activity, that we are to strive, to run: and let us proceed to consider, in the

Second place, the qualifications necessary for our success, the discipline that must fit us for the race, that must enable us to go through it with vigour, and to finish it with joy.

It was indispensably necessary that the candidates in the Grecian stadium should previously submit to a severe regimen and preparatory exercises, regulated and directed by a number of illustrious persons, ap-

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pointed daily to superintend them. Many passages from the ancient writers will occur to your memories. That of Epictetus perhaps is most full and in point: "You would conquer at the Olympic games "—You must conform to rules; submit to a diet, "refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether "you choose it or not, at a stated hour, in heat and "cold. In a word, you must give yourself up to "your master, as to a physician[c]." Thus the body was to be purified and lightened by strict temperance, braced by exercise, hardened by being inured to the changes of the atmosphere; when the day came, the aspirant was to be freed from such garments as might encumber or entangle him; and to observe the laws and rules recited by the herald before the games began.

To us who are engaged in the Christian race, St. Paul applies the first of these particulars in the words immediately following those of my text; "So run "that ye may obtain." If any ask, how, and in what manner; "he that striveth for the mastery is "temperate in all things." The apostle strengthens his precept by proposing his own example; "I there-"fore so run, not as uncertainly"—ουκ ως αδηλως—not as one unprepared to distinguish himself in public, as one preluding only in private, not yet trained and fitted for the conflict: "so fight I, not as one that "beateth the air," in a previous fictitious combat with mine own shadow; "but I keep under my "body," υπωπιαζω, contundo, augillo, I deal blows

[c] Epict. Arrian. iii. 15.

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in earnest, that do execution; "and bring it into sub-"jection" δουλαγωγω, lead it captive with all its appetites, obedient to my better part, my mind; and all this I do, "lest that by any means, when I have "preached to others," αλλοις κηρυξας, proclaimed to others the laws and the rewards, like the herald at the Olympic games, "I myself should be a cast-"away"—αδοκιμος, disapproved; be rejected as unworthy; come off without honour and approbation.

Nothing can be stronger or more forcible upon the subject than this passage. "He that striveth "for the mastery is temperate in all things." Otherwise he will never strive long, or to any purpose, in the conflicts to which he is exposed. At all times, and in all circumstances, "the corruptible body in "some degree presseth down the soul;" how much more when itself is oppressed with a load of meats and drinks! The time lost by sitting too long at the table is matter of some consideration; but this is not all: the mind becomes indisposed towards any rational, manly, noble employment, for many hours afterward; perhaps till the fumes of an intemperate meal shall have been carried off by a night's rest. When we are told that "the people sat down to "eat and to drink," the next information we received concerning them is, that they "rose up to play;" to something trifling and frivolous at best: but, probably, to something much worse; to something base and vicious, intemperance having awakened every other corrupt appetite and evil passion dormant in the heart of man. Daily experience evinces the truth of what is here advanced. There is no

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person who has not often perceived and lamented the difference he has found in himself, when cool and sprightly at one part of the day, and when heated and stupified at another. Believe it, and let it sink deep in your minds—"He that striveth for the mastery," either as an academic or a Christian, either in the prosecution of learning or his advancement in religion, if he wishes to succeed, "must be temperate "in all things." It was not more necessary for a candidate in the Grecian games to be so, than it is for him. And if an apostle of our Lord, one not a whit behind the chief of them, with all his gifts and graces, thought that, without a strict and constant adherence to this discipline, he was not safe, but, after converting the nations, might himself be lost; what are we, that we expect by any other means to secure our salvation? You have heard the words of the disciple; let me subjoin those of the Master—"Beware lest at any time your hearts be over-"charged," βαρυνθωσιν, made heavy, weighed down, "with surfeiting and drunkenness," κραιπαλη και μεθη, too much eating and too much drinking; "and so "that day," the day of death and of judgement, "come upon you unawares[d]."

Nor is it less expedient that we should be duly and regularly exercised in every species of good works, and inured to bear with equanimity, and without inconvenience, the change of fortune and situation; that so, when called forth at the hour of trial, we may be found ready and expert at the fittest and best

[d] Luke, xxi. 34.

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methods of doing the one, and undergoing the other. "Herein," says St. Paul, "do I exercise myself," ασκω, "to have always a conscience void of offence[e]." And he gives this advice to young Timothy; "Exercise thyself," γυμναζε σεαυτον, "unto godliness[f]." And respecting the patient endurance of change—"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith "to be content." I know both how to be abased, "and I know how to abound; every where and in "all things I am instructed, both to be full and to "be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. "I can do all things through Christ that strengthen-"eth me[g]." Great and illustrious champion! Well wast thou prepared to enter the lists, and to run the race! Trained by thy holy instructions and example, and aided by the same Saviour, may we be enabled, at an humble distance, to follow thee, and to do likewise!

In order to this we must remember to cast away every impediment, as the competitors in the games did. "Let us lay aside every weight," says the apostle, "and the sin which doth so easily beset "us[h]," συπεριστατον, *that entangles by wrapping round*, as the long and troublesome garments of the Greeks, unless thrown off, would entangle and impede their steps, and prove the fatal cause of losing the victory. What it is that encumbers and entangles him in his Christian course, there is no man but may soon learn, if he will but make an honest and diligent in-

[e] Acts, xxiv. 16. [f] 1 Tim. iv. 7. [g] Philip. iv. 11.
[h] Heb. xii. 1.

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quiry. And whatever it may be that does so encumber and entangle him, however near, and however dear, it must be parted with, and it is well worth his while to part with it. He will find himself abundantly recompensed by the freedom and alacrity, the cheerfulness and joy, with which he will afterward proceed; by the delightful and permanent frame of mind, in which he may apply to himself that passage of the Psalmist: "I will run the way of "thy commandments, for thou hast set my heart at "liberty."

Nothing now remains, but, in running the race, duly to observe the laws and rules prescribed for the conduct of it. "If a man strive for masteries," they are the words of St. Paul to Timothy, "he is "not crowned, except he strive lawfully[1]," νομίμως, according to the laws and rules. He must aim at the right mark, he must run within the appointed limits, and he must behave fairly and honourably to his competitors. Of these laws and rules the apostles have been the heralds, to proclaim and make them known. From their writings, and from primitive tradition, the church of England has framed her institutions; in conformity to which our University has enacted her statutes, so far as they concern religion and morals. But other objects, alas! are too often in the view, other pursuits too often engage the attention of our young men; and, instead of encouraging one another in the right way, too often they corrupt and seduce one another into those ways that

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 5.

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are not right. The more is the pity! O that occasion were not thus given for the mouths of our adversaries to be opened, for their tongues and their pens to be sharpened, as they are, against us!—Let us agree to wipe off, without delay, the reproach that has been fastened upon us, by performing our duty to God and man, upon a liberal and generous principle; by "running the race that is set before us," without the whips and goads of pains and penalties, for his sake "who loved us, and gave himself for "us." And for the encouragement of all to quit those courses which are wrong, to enter upon and persevere in that which alone is right, let us turn our thoughts, in the

Third and last place, to the prize held forth as the reward of the contest, and that circle of spectators, who are the witnesses of it, and of our behaviour under it.

To excite the emulation of the competitors in the Olympic games, by placing in their view the object of their ambition, the crowns appointed for the victors were laid upon a tripod, or table, which, during the celebrity, was brought out, and placed in the middle of the *stadium*.

Taking this idea with us, how just and noble do these expressions appear—"I press forward toward "the mark," σκοπον, the goal, "for the prize of the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "I have "fought a good fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give

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"thee a crown of life." "Hold fast that thou hast, "that no man take thy crown."

But the circumstance most striking in this part of the comparison, is the mighty difference between the crowns bestowed upon the conquerors in the Grecian games, and that reserved in store for them who shall finally overcome in the Christian race. St. Paul has made the observation, and founded an unanswerable argument upon it, why we should not suffer ourselves to be exceeded by them in the severity of our preparatory discipline, or the vigour of our exertions in the course. "They do it," says he, "to obtain "a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible[k]," αφθαρτον. And St. Peter speaks of a "crown of "glory that fadeth not away;" αμαραντινον, immortal, ever blooming—a fine contrast to poor, fading, withering crowns of wild olive and parsley, for of these were the Olympian and Isthmian garlands composed.

The sacred writers have exhausted the powers of human language in describing the reward which awaits the triumphant Christian. The riches of heaven, the honour which cometh from God only, and the pleasures at his right hand: the absence of all evil, the presence and enjoyment of all good; and this good enduring to eternity; never more to be taken from us; never more to be in any the least degree diminished, but for ever increasing—these are the wreaths which form the contexture of that crown

[k] 1 Cor. ix. 25.

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held forth to our hopes. And is not such a crown worth contending for? Shall we not with cheerfulness and alacrity endure some hardships to obtain it? Surely, if, by our words or our deeds, we say, No, the Grecians, who endured so many, for so very trifling a consideration, must rise up in the judgement against us and condemn us.

It may, perhaps, be alleged, that they saw the reward plainly before them, and that we do not. With our bodily eyes we do not. But a truth, confirmed to be such by sufficient authority, is, to all the intents and purposes of life, equally the object of our assent, of our firm trust and reliance, equally the ground of action, with what we see. Founded on its proper evidence, faith, like the dying martyr, "sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the "right hand of God;" sees those who are already crowned, and "have received palms from the Son of "God, whom they confessed in the world." They compose a splendid and awful circle, beholding from the heights to which their Redeemer's favour has exalted them, the conflict in which we are still engaged below, interesting themselves in our success, encouraging us to strive, and to persevere, as they did in the days of their flesh.

Conformably to this idea, and alluding to that prodigious assembly from all parts of the earth convened at Olympia, to be spectators of the games; before whom the candidates contended, having in view those venerable personages from whose hands they were to receive the palm, and who were immediate witnesses of their respective conduct and merit—allud-

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ing, I say, to these circumstances, St. Paul, in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, places the Christian combatant in the midst of a most august and magnificent theatre, filled with all those great and illustrious characters, enumerated in the preceding chapter, as having overcome, through the power of faith, from the beginning of the world; whose presence should animate and fire him to engage in the contest, with an ambition not to be reprehended, and a spirit altogether invincible.

You will give me leave to conclude with the passage, every expression of which you are now prepared to taste and feel, in its full force and energy.

"Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with "so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every "weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, "and let us run with patience the race that is set be-"fore us; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher "of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before "him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and "is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. "For consider him that endured such contradiction "of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and "faint in your minds;" think of the hard and bitter conflict, through which he passed; reflect upon his fortitude, and the promise of his grace, and be no more languid and dispirited. "Lift up the hands "which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make "straight paths for your feet, lest that which is "lame be turned out of the way;" exert in the Christian race those nerves that have been relaxed, and collect those spirits which have been depressed

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and dejected: make a smooth and even path for your steps, and remove the impediments which would obstruct and retard your course.—In all the particulars that have been mentioned, and every other—if there be any other—SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.

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DISCOURSE V.

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR.

EPHESIANS, VI. 11.

Put on the whole armour of God.

IN the foregoing parts of the epistle, St. Paul had enforced the duties resulting from the various relations of life. These are easily stated, but, as all sadly experience, not so easily performed. An opposition often arises within, excited by our own passions; and there are still more formidable enemies who attack us from without; endeavouring either to prevent us from forming proper resolutions, or from carrying them into execution when formed. Engaged as we are—necessarily engaged—in this perilous warfare, what is to be done? We are weak; how shall we become strong? We are without armour, either to defend ourselves, or to resist and put the enemy to flight: from what magazine shall we be provided? These questions are answered at large, and perfectly to satisfaction, in the portion of Scripture, which it shall be the design of the following discourse to explain, being the portion appointed for the epistle of this day.

"Finally, my brethren," says the apostle, having finished his scheme of duty, "be strong." If the

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sentence closed here, the exhortation would be to little purpose. He who only exhorts a weak man to become strong, only mocks and insults him, unless the means are pointed out by which this change may be effected; unless the source be discovered from whence strength is derived.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his "might." That which was wanting, is now fully supplied. What the power of God's might is, we very well know. Mountains tremble, and rocks melt before it; the sea feels it, and flies; Jordan is driven back. Armies are discomfited, and cut off by a blast, in the night. The world itself was produced by this power in one instant, and may be destroyed in another. All created power, if opposed to that of the Creator, withers and falls like a leaf in autumn, when shaken by the stormy wind and tempest. It is "in the power of this might," that the apostle exhorts us to be strong." But how is this? "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder "with a voice like him?" Yet St. Paul would never enjoin us to seek after that which could not be obtained. Our Redeemer is Almighty; he is with us by his Spirit, and his strength is ours. Look at his apostles in their natural state; ignorant and fearful of every thing: view them "endued with power from "on high;" acquainted with the whole counsel of God, and bold to proclaim it through all the nations of the earth. During the persecutions of the church, in her infant state, numbers of the weaker sex, receiving strength and courage from above, in the hour of trial, patiently endured all the torments which the

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malice of men and devils could invent. They triumphed gloriously. "Now are they crowned, and "receive palms from the Son of God, whom they "confessed in the world." The promise of assistance in time of need is to us all; to us and to our children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. From thee, blessed Jesus, we learn our duty: to thee must we look, and to thy all-powerful grace, for strength to perform it. Not in ourselves, but in thee, and in the power of thy might, we are strong. Without thee we can do nothing: with thee we can do all things.

It is this consideration which alone can support us, when we take a view of the enemies whom we must encounter. Attend to our apostle's description of them. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, "but against principalities, against powers, against "the rulers of the darkness of this world, against "spiritual wickedness in high places." The meaning is, that our own desires, carrying us on through the corruption of our nature towards forbidden actions, are not the only enemies with whom we are to contend; that there are others, not the less to be dreaded because we cannot see them; namely, evil spirits, who having been cast out of heaven, are permitted for a while to disturb the earth; to stir up against us either our own passions within, or the passions of other men without us; thus keeping the world in perpetual agitation, as the waves of the sea are driven and tossed by the wind. Such is our state, and the danger of it calls upon us diligently to learn and to practise all the rules which will presently be given us.

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Men in our days, however, have found out a much shorter method, than that prescribed by the apostle, of dealing with these our spiritual enemies. They either disbelieve the existence of any such; or, if they believe it, agree to think no more of them. Too often, indeed we hear the name of our great adversary pronounced; but it is only as a kind of expletive in common conversation. No point is less seriously thought of; and it seems as if Christians were disposed to lay it by, as an antiquated fable. Yet, if the Scriptures are not to be laid by at the same time, this adversary is there represented as something real, and something formidable. To him are ascribed the force of a lion, and the subtlety of a serpent; he is said to deceive the whole world; to have put it into the heart of Ananias to tell a lie, and of Judas to betray his Master; to work in all the children of disobedience. We are told, in short, that "the Son of God was manifest-"ed to destroy the works of the devil." And can we then calmly and sedately let it pass, that there are no such works and no such person; or, that it is a matter of indifference whether there be or not? Rest assured that such enemies we have, and that we shall fail in the combat, unless aided by a strength far superior to our own.

But since the strongest man enters not into battle without his armour, proceed we to consider that which, as the soldiers of Jesus Christ, the apostle directs us to provide.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of "God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, "and having done all, to stand."

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We must not so rely on the divine assistance, as to neglect our own exertions. Besides the strength communicated, as occasion requires, from above, there must be certain fixed and lasting dispositions wrought in the mind, which may render it at all times prepared and qualified to resist the enemy. These are represented as so many different pieces of armour, which all together compose what is styled "the whole "armour of God." From him we receive it, and by him we are enabled to use it. It is to be put on and worn constantly; no more to be laid aside than our limbs[a] or our faculties. Nor must any part be omitted: "Put on the *whole* armour of God." It is elsewhere called "the armour of *light*;" as serving, among other purposes, to discover to us the position, strength, and designs of our adversaries, "the rulers "of the darkness of this world," who love darkness, and work in darkness. They must be discovered, before they can be conquered, or indeed attacked. Otherwise, approaching unseen, they may suddenly attack and conquer us. Even when we have a sufficiency of light, the day of battle is, as the apostle says of it, "an evil day," a day of toil, of labour, of hazard; a day which all must wish to be well over; a day in which nothing but the armour of God, and the power of God, can enable us to brave the fury of the conflict; and having performed every thing expected of us as soldiers, to be found, unrepulsed, on our station, when it shall be happily end-

[a] Arma enim membra militis esse dicunt. Cic.

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ed—" That ye may be able to stand in the evil day; " and, having done all, to stand."

Let us now survey, one by one, the several pieces of this divine armour; only first premising to you, that St. Paul borrows his ideas from the arms in use among the nations in his own time, some of which are still retained, while others have been long since dropped and changed.

" Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about " with truth."

The Christian must not suffer himself to be surprised. He must be always under arms, ever looking out, and waiting for the enemy in the posture of a combatant. In a camp, unless the watch be duly set and kept, sleep may be death. " I found him " dead"—said the general who killed a sentinel sleeping on his post—" I found him dead, and I left " him so."—" Stand, therefore."

In the next words, " having your loins girt about " with truth," an allusion is made to the military belt or girdle. It answered two ends. First, it prevented the other garments from being in the way; secondly, it braced and strengthened the loins, around which it was girt: in a word, it rendered all compact and firm. A sincere and hearty attachment to truth has a like effect upon the mind. The man possessed of it is at once decided in his choice and in his measures. He knows what he has to do, and readily sets about it, without let or hinderance. A double-minded man, who is guided sometimes by principle, and sometimes by interest, is unstable and dilatory in all his ways. He has so many doubts, and diffi-

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culties, and hopes, and fears, that he can no more move and act with spirit and alertness, than one encumbered with a long flowing vestment, in the folds of which the arms and feet are every moment entangled. The resolutions formed by such an one are weak and feeble, presently shaken and dissolved by every fresh consideration which comes across him. He does nothing, or what is worse than nothing, being generally, in the end, for want of strength and steadiness, carried away to do what he ought not to do. If he knows the truth, he is easily prevailed upon to forsake it for something else. A soldier of this cast will make but a despicable figure in the Christian camp. Above all things, therefore, keep the truth close to you, adhere immoveably to it, and "the truth shall make you free;" free to speak, free to act, free—should there be occasion—to suffer. "Stand, having your loins girt about with truth."

"And having on the breast-plate of righteousness." The breast-plate, as its name imports, was a plate of iron or brass to secure the breast, and, consequently, the heart and other vital parts contained within it. As an attachment to truth was denominated a girdle, so by a breast-plate is represented a love of righteousness, a consciousness of integrity, in short, what we call a good conscience, "a conscience "void of offence," as the apostle elsewhere speaks, "towards God and towards man." But if any man sin—and every man has sinned—how then can he possess such a conscience? By such his sin being forgiven, upon his repentance, through the blood of Christ; when he becomes again righteous—for he is

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accounted to be so against whom no charge any longer lies—and his conscience is rendered again pure, or void of offence; for the offence, being forgiven, is no more an offence than if it had never existed. This is what we must ever mean by a good conscience, a pure conscience, a conscience void of offence; since, if by those expressions were meant, a consciousness of having never offended, no man living upon earth could have a conscience good, pure, and void of offence; much less could St. Paul have had such an one, who confesses himself to have been "the greatest of sinners."

A good conscience, then, we say is a breast-plate, it gives a holy confidence in God, which breaks the force of such temptations as arise from the fears and terrors of the world, the malice, pride, and envy of mankind. It preserves the heart whole and sound, whatever of this kind may assail it. It is like a warm comfortable house, into which a man retreats; where he finds good provision and good company, and hears the storm without beating upon it in vain. By doing what is right, and taking the proper method to obtain forgiveness when at any time you have been unawares seduced to do wrong, "exercise yourselves," as the apostle did, "to have a conscience void of "offence," and rejoice evermore in its testimony. Secure this friend at home, and regard not what your enemies are saying against you abroad. "Their "words may be spears and arrows, and their tongue "a sharp sword;" but "the breast-plate of righ-"teousness" is proof against all their strokes.

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We are enjoined, thirdly, to "have our feet shod "with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

It is by the feet that men advance and make a progress in the way in which they are to go. That way is sometimes rough, sometimes miry, sometimes beset with briers and thorns. Soldiers of old were therefore furnished with a kind of armour for the leg and foot, that they might march, secure and unhurt, over all the different kinds of ground they were to meet with. Answerable hereunto is a certain "pre-"paration" of mind in a Christian, to advance in holiness, and tread the path of duty, however rough with hardships, deep with afflictions, or perplexed and entangled with difficulties. For this preparation we are indebted to "the Gospel of peace." That alone can supply us with it.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith "ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the "wicked," or "the wicked one."

The shield or buckler, used of old, was a piece of defensive armour, made of leather, of tough bull-hides, and covered with plates of brass thick and strong: it was fastened by thongs to the left arm, and readily moved to protect any part of the body, at which the warrior perceived, or had reason to expect, that a dart would be aimed: the dart then struck the shield, was stopped, blunted, and fell harmless to the ground. Such to the Christian warrior is *faith*, or *belief* in the divine promises and threatenings, the rewards and punishments of a future state. It repels and extinguishes the fiery darts

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thrown by the tempting objects around us. For who would yield to a base lust, who would suffer a prospect of this world's wealth or honour to tempt him from his duty, if he saw heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God holding out a crown for the righteous; or the Almighty on his throne, prepared with a thunderbolt to strike the wicked into a place of torment?—We do not see this with the bodily eye; but faith, which is "the evidence of things not seen" as yet, makes it all present to the mind's eye, and thus repels every temptation to transgress, causing the fiery dart of the wicked one to fall and *go out* without hurting us. Were our faith always awake and active, it would preserve us in our integrity. We never sin but when we have first suffered it to slumber: we are off our guard: "the shield of the mighty has "been shamefully cast away."

The last piece of defensive armour recommended by the apostle, is "the helmet of salvation."

The helmet, as is well known, was a cap of iron or steel for the head, to fence against any blows a part so very important; a part from whence proceed those instruments of sensation called the nerves; the seat of thought and understanding, and, as many philosophers have imagined, the residence of the soul herself. The meaning of St. Paul in this expression is explained in another passage, where, writing on the same subject, he says, "And "for an *helmet* the *hope* of salvation." When we have lost *hope*, a blow has been struck that stupefies and unnerves us; understanding perishes, and strength

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fails: despair is to the *Christian*, what a stroke that cleaves the skull is to the *man;* there is no longer the breath of life in him. He who possesses the hope of salvation, through the power of such hope can do all things, and bear all things; because he still looks forward to the end of his hope, which will reward all his actions, and make ample amends for all his sufferings; but, *that* once given up, there is nothing any longer worth contending for or thinking about. The mind, turning itself on every side to seek rest, and finding none, sinks into all the wretchedness of utter despondency, and the agonizing groan of suicide is heard! Daily, therefore, cherish and invigorate your hope in Christ; pray daily to God, that it may never fail you; diligently read such parts of holy Scripture as may revive it when languishing, and re-establish it. Should you find your own meditations insufficient, consult without delay your minister, or some religious and sensible friend. A word of instruction, comfort, and encouragement from another, spoken in season, has often prevented the dreadful crime of self-murder from being committed. Evermore, then, remember to "take for an "helmet the hope of salvation;" and put it not off, till the contest be finally over, and hope ceases by our becoming possessed of its object.

To the Christian, thus armed for defence in the day of battle, the apostle recommends only one *offensive* weapon; but it is abundantly sufficient; "the "*sword* of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" sharper than any two-edged sword fabricated by the art of man, piercing even to the dividing asunder

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of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; reaching the very thoughts and intentions; subduing and mortifying evil desires and blasphemous imaginations as they arise within; confuting and silencing infidelity and error as they assault us from without. A single text, well understood and rightly applied, pierces the heart of a temptation or an objection, and lays the most formidable adversary dead at our feet. With this weapon the blessed Jesus conquered in the wilderness; by the same weapon, and no other, must every disciple of his expect to conquer in the world.

And now, friends and fellow-soldiers in the Christian warfare, listen to the voice of inspiration, and be directed by one who cannot direct you wrong. Enemies of all kinds surround you; enter not into the battle unarmed: the host of darkness is in array against you; put on the armour of light to discover and survey it. Let truth be the girdle of your loins, let righteousness be the protection of your heart, and let the sandals of the Gospel of peace adorn and defend your feet in the way in which you go; let faith be your invincible shield, and hope your impenetrable helmet; and on the thigh be girded the sword of the Spirit, bright and shining, and ready for use, and to be drawn at a moment's warning. Thus completely armed from head to foot, always remembering from whence come skill and strength for the battle, fall upon your knees, as the apostle enjoins at the close of his exhortation; "pray with "all supplication, and watch with all perseverance." Then go forth; and may the Almighty go forth with

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you, teaching your hands to war and your fingers to fight, and at length giving you a complete and glorious victory over every enemy, through the Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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DISCOURSE VI.

THE DUTY OF CONSIDERING THE POOR.

PSALM XLI. 1.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor.

As the world was made by wisdom, it requires wisdom to understand the frame of it. The more a man increases in wisdom, the more he will understand it; and the more he understands, the more he will approve. The full perfection of a complex machine in all its parts, with their respective bearings and mutual dependencies on each other, is best comprehended by an artist. Superficial thinkers see little, and blame; deep thinkers see much, and commend.

In viewing the constitution of the moral system, there is scarcely a phenomenon that strikes so forcibly upon the mind, or occasions so much perplexity in it, as that of the inequality of mankind, or the state and condition of the poor. In the passage of Scripture which has been just read, we are invited by the promise of a blessing, to employ our thoughts on that subject: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor;" that giveth himself thoroughly to study and understand their case, and why it is as it is; to see the reason of the thing, and his own duty resulting from it.

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The inequality of mankind is a plain and undeniable matter of fact: nor does it happen occasionally, in this or that age, in this or that country: it is universal and unavoidable, at least in the situation of affairs which has taken place in the world since the fall. From that period, it ever has been so, it ever will be so, it ever must be so, till the time of the restitution of all things. What, then, will be the first consideration with a rich man, when he sees a poor man? If he be endowed with a clear head and a good heart, will he not reason in some such manner as the following?

God has given the earth to the children of men, for the support of all. While I abound, why does this man want? Plainly, that we may bear one another's burdens; that my abundance may supply his need, may alleviate his distress, may help to sustain the affliction under which he groans; that I may take off his load of woe, and he take off the superfluity of my wealth; that so the stream, now broken and turbid, may again find its level, and flow pure and tranquil. Otherwise, if he be suffered thus to carry on his shoulders through life the weight of all this accumulated misery, should he murmur and complain, would it not be with some colour of justice, and must not I in some measure be answerable for his so doing? We are formed, by the same Artificer, of the same materials; our trust is in the same Saviour, and we must stand before the same Judge; yet there are, on my side, health, affluence, and joy; on his, sickness, indigence, and sorrow: I have enough to supply every want that luxury itself can

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fancy; while he has not wherewithal to support his family, or to satisfy his own hunger. Surely, for this very end were riches bestowed upon me, and not without a design is this poor object thrown in my way, that I might use them aright, and justify the ways of Providence. The inequality of nature shall be rectified by religion. This man shall have as much as he needs; and I can enjoy no more. He shall not want, while I have to spare. God, who has given to man, delights that man should give; and he who gives most, does most resemble his Maker.

Nor let the rich imagine, that what they thus give is thrown away, or given to those who can make no return: let them not grudge to bestow some part of their wealth on the poor—they bestow it on those, to whom, under God, they owe the whole. For what, I beseech you, is the nature of society? Is it composed only of the noble and opulent? Did you ever hear, or read, of one that was so composed? Such a society could not subsist for a week. As the members of it would not work, they could not eat. Of what value were your estates in the country, if the poor did not cultivate them? Of what account the riches of the nobleman or the gentleman, if they must want the comforts, the conveniences, and even the necessaries of life? "The king himself is served "by the field," and, without the labours of the husbandman, must starve in his palace, surrounded by his courtiers and guards. The world depends for subsistence on the plough, the sickle, and the

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flail[a]. To what purpose warehouses of merchandise in the city? Who but the poor will submit to the drudgery of exporting our own commodities, and importing others in return? Nay, by whom but by the poor could they be prepared either for consumption at home, or exportation abroad; could they be manufactured from first to last; could they be brought, and lodged in the warehouses of the merchant; could such warehouses be built, and fitted to receive them?

Mankind, in short, constitute one vast body, to the support of which every member contributes his share; and by all of them together, as by so many greater and lesser wheels in a machine, the business of the public is carried on, its necessities are served, and its very existence is upholden. And in this body we may truly say, that the lowest and least honourable members are as necessary as any others; indeed, they have, in one sense, a more abundant honour; for though the head be, without all doubt, a more noble part than either the feet or the hands, yet what would soon be the fate of the best head in the world if these its servants should cease to minister to it? The rich, therefore, cannot live alone, without the poor; and they never support the poor but the poor have first supported them. And should they be permitted to perish by whom we all live? Forbid it prudence and gratitude, as well as philosophy and religion!

From hence it appears, that the inequality of

[a] See M'Farlan, p. 236.

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mankind is not the effect of chance, but the ordinance of Heaven, by whose appointment, as manifested in the constitution of the universe, some must command, while others obey; some must labour, while others direct their labours; some must be rich, while others are poor. The Scripture inculcates the same important truth, and the inference to be deduced from it—"The poor shall never cease "out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy bro-"ther, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land[b]." Such is the method directed by Heaven of balancing the account between the different orders of men. Any other scheme of equality would destroy itself as soon as formed. And politicians should be extremely cautious how they propagate principles tending to render the subordinate ranks in society discontented with their condition, and desirous of aspiring to one for which they were never designed by Providence, of whose arrangements in the moral, we may say, as the Psalmist does of those in the natural world, "In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

The foregoing consideration will suggest another to the mind of every one, whose meditations are turned towards the subject. For since there is, and, to answer the purposes of society, there must be, such inequality among men, it is but natural to ask the man who finds himself in a situation preferable to that of his neighbour, and yet refuses to have compassion upon him in his distress—How came

[b] Deut. xv. 11.

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your lot to be cast in so fair a ground? You might have been destitute of health and strength, of food and raiment, of instruction and knowledge. Who caused you thus to differ from your poor brother? His capacity, perhaps, with due cultivation, might have evinced itself not a whit inferior to your own; his morals may be purer than yours; and had he been possessed of your wealth, he might have made a better use of it than you do. It is not your merit, or his demerit, which occasions the difference between you. It has been permitted, that the work of God may be manifested in you both; that he from his poverty may learn patience and resignation, and you be taught charity and the right employment of the good things vouchsafed you. He was not suffered to fall into this condition that you should overlook and despise, but that you should consider and comfort him. You have an advantage over him, without doubt—and your Saviour has informed you wherein it consists—"It is more blessed "to give than to receive." Secure this blessing, and the end of your being made to differ is answered.

It might have pleased God that you *should* have been poor. But this is not all—it may please him, that you *shall* be so: and hard would you esteem it, in such a case, not then to experience the benevolence you are now invited to display. It is God's high prerogative to exalt and to abase: he putteth down one and setteth up another. The history of the world is but a comment on this text. Empires, whose stamina seemed to have been composed of

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iron and brass, are seen to decay and perish; while others, little thought of, arise from the dust and flourish in their places. That the same thing happens respecting families and individuals, the chronicles of the times contain abundant evidence; and instances will occur to your minds of revolutions in this way sudden and decisive as that mentioned by the Psalmist in another—"In the morning it is green, "and groweth up; but in the evening it is cut down, "dried up, and withered!" To these rapid changes citizens of commercial states are more liable than others. A fleet puts to sea laden with the precious commodities of the East or the West. At the word of the Creator the stormy wind ariseth; the vessels are dispersed; they sink in the mighty waters; the fortunes and the hopes of the owners go down with them. The failure of one person affects many others; and these breaches on private credit cause us, ever and anon, to cast an anxious eye toward the public, and to think what might have been the effect of an insurrection and a conflagration. To the riches of this country is more peculiarly applicable that which the wise man saith of them in general—"They make themselves wings",—yea, *their* wings are ready made; they are prepared at the shortest notice, to "fly away," and leave a nation poor indeed! Thus weighty and powerful are the reasons why WE should not trust in riches so eminently *uncertain;* without taking into the account examples, in which the Almighty sometimes makes bare his holy arm in a more tremendous manner.

But whether riches leave you or not, yet a little

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while—and it can be but a little while—before you must leave them. However gay and prosperous you go through life, death will certainly strip you of all, and leave you more truly destitute than the neediest wretch that was ever laid at your gate. Neither land nor money can accompany you to the grave. The hour must come—and while we speak, it is hastening forward—when strength will droop, beauty will fade, and spirits will fail; when physicians will despair, friends will lament, and all will retire; when from the palaces of the city, and the paradises of the country, you must go down to the place where all these things are forgotten, and take up your residence in the solitude of the tomb.—What, *then*, will riches avail?—Much every way, if they have been bestowed in charity; if the thought of death—that most profitable and salutary of all thoughts, that epitome of true philosophy—shall have excited you, through life, to "consider the poor."

For it is in the Gospel, that we must seek *full* information on the subject of this most important duty. It is there, and there alone, we are instructed to behold the poor as we ought to behold them; to consider (if I may use such apparently strange expressions) their pre-eminence, their dignity, and those especial privileges with which they are invested under the new economy. The world was redeemed by one who, for that purpose, did not disdain to appear in the form of a poor man; one who, while "the foxes had holes, and the birds of "the air had nests, had not where to lay his head." I speak to them that "know the grace of our Lord

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"Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our "sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, "might be rich." *His* appearance in this state has cast a glory round it, and forces us to view it in a new light; so that, although to the bodily eye nothing appears but what is base, mean, and contemptible, yet the interior eye of the understanding, enlightened from above, discovers the person of the Saviour, the images of his poverty, the citizens of his kingdom, the heirs of his promises, the stewards of his blessings. Let it be allowed me, in passing, barely to suggest a hint in favour of the religion which has thus furnished a remedy for the inequality of mankind, and, while its precepts shall be obeyed by the rich, has provided for the welfare and comfort of the poor.

But in what measure, it may be said, are these precepts to be obeyed? How are we to proportion our donations to our fortunes? The number of those who call upon us for assistance is daily increasing; and so are the expenses of life, which render us less able to assist them.

In answer to these questions, it might, perhaps, be asserted, that, were the Christian principle firmly rooted in the heart, they would never be asked. True charity stands not in need of being told how much it should give. It is in its nature free and unbounded, as the air diffused through the spaces around us, or the light which flows in every direction from the centre, for the support and animation of the world. It fulfils the law, or rather, goes beyond all law, and of its own will effects that wherein law itself

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fails. It not only "works no ill to its neighbour;" it does him all the good in its power, and wishes it could do him more.—Thus much might be replied in general. But as this is a part of our subject which comes home to men's business and bosoms; as, through the infirmity and corruption that are in us, the divine principle may at times be upon the decline, and the selfish principle likely to gain the ascendant; it may not be improper to dwell a moment longer upon it, and to lay down a rule or two, the observance of which will greatly conduce towards sustaining the one and repressing the other[c].

The first rule shall be this: Let every person, at those seasons when he is in the receipt of his income, lay aside a certain proportion, as he is disposed in his heart, for charitable uses; and let it be, ever after, sacred to those uses. A bank of this kind would enable a man to answer bills of considerable value at sight, which otherwise not being able to do, or at least not without great inconvenience, many opportunities of succouring the distressed must needs be lost. The money being once appropriated, he feels not the loss, nor grudges the payment when demanded. Thus he is always giving, and has always something to give.

The second rule, if you please, may be the following: *Practise economy, with a view to charity.* The same charity, which is desirous of doing the utmost for the benefit of its poor neighbour, is likewise very ingenious in devising the ways and means of doing it.

[c] See Bourdaloue sur l'Aumône, et Bib. Chois. 14. 291.

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And though, in the present state of society, it be not required, that the opulent should sell their possessions, and divide the produce among the indigent, or that persons of all ranks and conditions should live in the same style; yet, surely, no one can survey the world, as it goes now among us, without being of opinion, that *something*—and that very far from inconsiderable—*something*, I say, might be retrenched from the expenses of building, *something* from those of furniture, *something* from those of dress, *something* from those of the table, *something* from those of diversions and amusements, public and private, for the relief and consolation of the many who have neither a cottage to inhabit, garments to cover them, bread to eat, medicine to heal them, nor any one circumstance in life to lighten their load of misery, or cheer their sorrowful and desponding souls in the day of calamity and affliction. Certainly a man would be no loser, who should sometimes sit down to a less profuse and costly board at home, if, at his going abroad, "when the ear heard him, then it "blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave "witness to him; because he delivered the poor that "cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to "help him: if the blessing of him that was ready to "perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's "heart to sing for joy."—Beneficence is the most exquisite luxury, and the good man, after all, is the genuine epicure.

Here, then, is a mine opened, which, when worked by economy, under the direction of prudence, will be found inexhaustible, furnishing a constant and ample

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revenue for the disbursements of charity, to the profit of multitudes, without oppressing or injuring any one human being. Nay, from that diversion (if it can be called such) under the effects of which the nation now groans through all its powers, the evil might soon be extracted, could a law be positively carried into execution, enacting, that the sums respectively lost and won should be applied to the same blessed purpose. The amusement might continue, and pleasure be employed in the interest of virtue.

The supplies thus provided, let us advert to the expenditure.

Of the poor, some are both able and willing to work. When these are forced to beg because no one will hire them to dig, their lot is truly pitiable. The most excellent method of showing charity to such is by finding them employment, which at once relieves their wants, and preserves them from temptation. Every scheme that policy can devise should be put in practice at this time, when so many thousands that have been engaged, at the hazard of their lives, in our defence and protection, by sea and land, must otherwise be reduced to starve, to steal, or to emigrate. Individuals blessed with affluence, have a noble opportunity of adorning their estates, while, with this farther end in view, as citizens they most effectually serve their country, and as Christians they shall by no means lose their reward. The community should strain every nerve in the cause. Days of peace should be days of improvement. Designs of public utility should be forthwith entered upon. Returning and increasing commerce

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will suggest many. The encouragement of manufactures, the establishment of new fisheries in different parts of the kingdom, the cultivation of waste lands, of which (strange to tell!) there are thousands of acres lying within a few miles of the metropolis—these are the objects which rival statesmen should unite to prosecute. Let us hope we shall live to see the day when they will do so. "In the multitude of "the people is the strength of the king." Provide employment, and you will never want people, nor will those people want food. Hands will flock where there is work to be done; and between working and eating the connexion is indissoluble[d].

In the second class of the poor may be ranked those who are able to work, but not willing. These compose a band very formidable to society. To maintain them in idleness, is to render them every day more so. They must be inured to labour by wholesome discipline. You cannot show them a greater kindness. Thus, and thus only, can their ferocity be tamed, and their passions subdued; good principles may in time take the place of bad ones, and habits of industry by degrees be formed and matured. To effect this end by these means is the design (and a most admirable design it is) of one part of those many charitable institutions, for which this great and flourishing city is so deservedly famous throughout the world, and for which I have the honour this day to appear as an unworthy advocate.

Another part of them is calculated to diminish,

[d] See M'Farlan, p. 416.

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as much as may be, the numbers of this class of poor; it goes directly to the root of the disorder, and endeavours that the good principles and habits above-mentioned may from the very beginning be implanted in the young and tender mind, by a virtuous and well conducted education, thus sowing the seeds of felicity for future ages.

In the most ample and munificent manner is provision made by others of them for a third class of poor, such, I mean, as are willing to work but not able; for, of whatever nature the disability may be, or from whatever cause it may have proceeded, whether from casual hurt, from the languor of disease, or from a distempered mind, immediate help is at hand. All the pressing miseries incident to man have here their peculiar houses of reception and relief, where the most consummate skill, medical and chirurgical, that can be obtained by him who is the possessor of millions, is readily and cheerfully exerted for the ease and recovery of the poor[e]—institutions these, unknown, unthought of, in the polished ages of Greece and Rome—peculiar to the days of the Gospel—the boast of Christianity (were it capable of boasting), the ornament and glory of this great emporium!—How effectual they have proved in answering the several ends proposed, the *Report*, now to be recited, will best inform you.

Here the Report *was read.*

The case itself speaks so forcibly to your feelings, and

[e] M'Farlan, 299.

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calls so loudly for your kind assistance, that it renders needless any long exhortation from the preacher. The expenses annually incurred by the several hospitals you find to exceed their certain revenues; and therefore they must depend, for support, on the farther donations of the benevolent. Suffer not the blaze of charity, which now burns with so much heat and splendour, to die away for want of lasting fuel. You have heard how useful these establishments have proved; be it your endeavour to make them permanent. Whatever can be spared (and with proper management much by every one may be spared), let it be lodged as a treasure—a treasure to yourselves, as well as to them—in these public repositories—It is lodged in good hands, and will be employed, to the uttermost farthing, as your hearts can desire. Did I plead only for one of them, attention would be due; let me not lift up my voice in vain when I lift it up for them all. "Among those "actions," says the great moralist of the age—"among those actions which the mind can most se-"curely review with unabated pleasure, is that of "having contributed to an hospital for the sick."—But we have a more sure word, a word which cannot fail, which shall stand fast for ever—a word of promise, that he who has been the means of giving comfort to the sick, besides being blessed with prosperity in the days of health, shall, when himself in sickness, be comforted with comfort from above. "Blessed is "he that considereth the poor: the Lord will de-"liver him in time of trouble. The Lord will pre-"serve him and keep him alive, and he shall be

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"blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver "him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will "strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou "wilt make all his bed in his sickness."—The same gracious hand will conduct him, in perfect safety, through the valley of the shadow of death, to that holy and heavenly hill, where he shall be hailed by the thousands he has relieved, and see the face of that Redeemer, for whose sake he has relieved them.

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DISCOURSE VII.

CHARITY TO THE BRETHREN OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW, XXV. 40.

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

YET once again, by the favour of the Almighty, we have lived to see the return of this holy season; again we are assembled in the house of God, to turn our thoughts toward the second advent of our Lord. The church by her services on this day directs us to do so; and we will obey her. In the portion of Scripture selected for the Gospel, his appearance and the forerunners of it are marked out for our contemplation; signs above, and terrors beneath; the earth distressed and perplexed, the powers of heaven shaken, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming—the trumpet sounds through all the regions of the grave, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judge-"ment;" the everlasting doors are unfolded; the King of glory, triumphant Messiah, Lord of men and angels, appears in the resplendent robes of celestial majesty: the armies of heaven follow him in

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procession, down to this lower world: the throne is set; the books are opened: the dead are judged; and that sentence is passed, from which there lies no appeal.

Is all this true? Most assuredly it is. No person who hears me at this moment dares even to *think* it is not. A monitor within bears a faithful testimony to what I say, and will not suffer infidelity or doubt to intrude.

And are we—you and I—concerned in it all? As certainly as we are now met together in this place: no man or woman who has ever been, or ever will be born, can claim exemption—"We must *all* appear "before the judgement-seat of Christ."

Some little degree of curiosity, I should therefore hope, may have been excited, to inquire into the grounds upon which will be passed an irreversible sentence, either to everlasting happiness or everlasting misery: for there is no middle condition; of one or the other we must inevitably partake. The Scripture from whence my text is taken, will afford us considerable assistance in the inquiry, and enable us to form some sort of opinion beforehand, where our lot is likely to fall.

Our Lord, according to St. Matthew's account, being at the eve of his sufferings, the history of which commences at the next (the 26th) chapter, closes his divine instructions to his disciples with a representation of his future proceedings on the great and awful day. "When the son of man," says he, "shall "come in his glory, and all the holy angels with "him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;

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"and before him shall be gathered all nations; and "he shall separate them one from another, as a "shepherd (in the evening) divideth his sheep from "the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right "hand, but the goats on the left." To the former he first addresses that inexpressibly sweet invitation, mercy to the last rejoicing against judgement, and delighting to give the inheritance which it had spared no pains to purchase—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the "foundation of the world." Now be pleased to observe the reason upon which this invitation is founded. "For," saith Christ, "I was an hungred, "and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me "drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, "and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited "me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The righteous, very few of whom, out of the innumerable multitudes that are to be then assembled, ever saw their Lord in the days of his humiliation, wondering what this should mean, reply, with all the submissive earnestness of affection, "Lord, when "saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee; or thirsty, "and gave thee drink;" or relieved thee in any of the other circumstances of which thou art pleased thus to speak? The words of the text contain his most gracious answer—"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch "as ye have done it unto one of the least of these "my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Let us consider the *works* to be done, the *principle* on which they are to be done, and the *acceptance* they will be sure to find.

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I. The works to be done—" Inasmuch as ye " have done it." By a Christian there is always something to be *done*. It was never intended that he, of all men, should be idle. Providence has given him powers and opportunities, and will require an account of the use that has been made of them. In the Gospel we are told of a servant, styled the unprofitable servant. Instead of improving the talent committed to his trust, he had hidden his Lord's money in the earth; he had buried his faculties in sloth and sensuality; they had produced nothing. Dreadful was his punishment, and it was in kind; he was bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness: as he *would* do nothing when he had the power, that power was taken from him, and he now *could* do nothing, but reflect for ever on his own misery, and the happiness he had lost.

Respecting the men of the world, it cannot be said that they are always idle: they are often busily employed; they are doing something; they are doing much; but it is mischief; mischief to themselves, mischief to others. And to very few of those whose exploits fill the volumes of history, and engage the attention of ages, can it be truly said, " Well done, " good and faithful servant." The unprofitable and the workers of iniquity will be bound with the same chain.

Of doing evil we frequently think—if we think at all—with abhorrence, and, it is to be hoped, labour to keep ourselves from it. But the crime of doing nothing, with the penalty annexed to it, is not recollected. That we have often, notwithstanding all our

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care, "done those things which we ought not to have "done," we must be sensible; but who is he that duly considers how often he has "left undone those things "which he ought to have done." They are the sins of *omission*, that will crowd the account at the last day, more in number than the hairs of our heads. The thought would cause our hearts to fail us, should God be extreme to mark them.

The character of the Christian religion is most exactly portrayed in those few words, which describe the life of its Founder—"He went about doing good:" *active* in *beneficence*, always in motion for some salutary purpose, to relieve the distresses and comfort the sorrows of poor mankind. He expects that they who profess to be his followers, should be such more especially in this respect. Of the disciple Tabitha it is testified by the Holy Spirit, in the Acts of the Apostles, that "she was full of good works and "alms-deeds which she did." The garments wrought by her own hands for the poor, were produced before the apostle, to prove that she had not been idle; that she had been *employed*; that she had been *well* employed. She obtained the peculiar favour of a resurrection to this life, to show, I suppose, that all like her will obtain one to a better.—What a sad reverse have we in the case of the rich glutton! He appropriated to his own luxury the means put into his hands to do good to others. And where is he now? You hear his voice, requesting of the wretched object that had lain neglected at his gate "a drop of "water to cool his tongue."—Wretched man that he was! so to lose the opportunities which shall never

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return!—But why should I multiply instances, or say any more upon this part of the subject, when our Lord, in the Scripture before us, has declared, that his gracious invitation, "Come ye blessed," will be made only to such as have performed these works of charity? How can it be made to us, if we have *not* performed them? From the necessity of performing them, pass we, therefore,

II. To the *principle* upon which they must be performed.

By faith we are saved: but faith without works is dead; it is no more faith, effectual to salvation, than a dead corpse is a man; it is a tree without fruit; notwithstanding all its professions, it will be sentenced to the axe and to the fire. The proper fruit of faith is love; love of God who hath done so much for man; love of man for whom God hath done so much. Love can work no ill to its neighbour; its nature is to work him all the good in its power; it branches forth into every office of charity mentioned by our Lord; it feeds the hungry; gives drink to the thirsty; clothes the naked; lodges the stranger; visits and comforts the sick, and those that are in prison. It may not be able literally and personally to do all this; but it provides for this being done, by freely and liberally contributing that money which answers every thing. And these acts of beneficence and kindness are performed, not out of interest or party, or to serve a turn; not out of vanity or ostentation, or because others perform them, and we shall be reflected on and lose the esteem of men if we neglect to perform them; but they are performed through

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faith in what Christ has done and suffered for us, and through a grateful desire of making some return for all his goodness, to those whom he is pleased to style *his brethren.* "Inasmuch as ye have done it to these "*my brethren.*" The children being "partakers of "flesh and blood, he also," by coming in the flesh, "partook of the same; for which reason he is not "ashamed to call them *brethren.*" Consider duly the weight of this motive. When you do good upon the strength of it, it is as if you addressed a poor person in the following manner—"I relieve you in your "distress because of the near relation you bear to "that blessed person who has relieved me in all "mine; my friend, my benefactor, my Saviour, my "God. I too was an hungred, and he gave me the "bread of life; I was thirsty, and he gave me the "water of life; I was a stranger, not belonging to "the fold, and he took me into it; I was naked, and "he clothed me with the robe of righteousness; I was "sick, and he visited me, and comforted me, and "made me whole; I was in prison, and he came to "me, loosed the bands of sin and death, and brought "me forth into light, liberty, and salvation. You "come recommended to me as one of those whom he "condescends to call his brethren. Accept, for his "sake, what I can give you: I would it were more: "all I have is too little.

You see, then, the principle on which Christ directs that our charity should be shown. A noble, comprehensive, affecting principle it is. It involves within its compass, and supposes to be known and believed, the whole of Christianity. Thus employed,

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faith has its perfect work: it is made perfect in love. The acceptance it will be sure to find is the

IIId. and last point to be considered.

Our Lord accepts such works, when done upon such a principle, as if they had been done to himself: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these my "brethren, ye have done it unto *me*." And this produces a reason for his rewarding them which no other consideration would afford. Infinite mercy, after bestowing every thing upon us, has, as it were, set itself to contrive a manner in which it might become our debtor. "You have done these acts of "kindness to ME; I take upon me to recompense "them." There is something so utterly astonishing in all this, that we might have imagined some mistake crept into the text, had no other passage of Scripture conveyed to us the same idea. For that our Lord will accept and reward what shall be so done to *him*, can be known only from himself and his Holy Spirit.

But to *reward*, is the great end of his coming; as he has himself declared, in the twenty-second chapter of St. John's Revelation. "Behold, I come quickly; "and my reward is with me, to give to every man "according as his work shall be."

Before his appearance in the flesh, as at this time, he proclaimed by one of his holy prophets, that whatsoever we give to the poor he esteems as lent to himself; which much resembles the words of the text, "Ye have done it unto me." And he does not disdain to add, that he will be accountable for it; since thus we read, in the book of Proverbs, "He that

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"hath pity upon the poor, *lendeth* unto the Lord; "and look"—expect, depend upon it, be assured—"it shall be paid him again." Sir Thomas More, a famous Lord Chancellor of England, used always to say, "there was more rhetoric," more persuasive argument, "in this little sentence, than in a whole "library."

Again: He assures us by his blessed apostle, that every deed of kindness which is shown in this manner towards *his name*, will be *remembered;* for "God," saith the apostle, "is not unrighteous, that he should "forget your work and labour of love, which ye have "shown towards his name," towards *his name* you see, "in that ye have ministered to the saints, and "do minister," still continuing, persevering in your charitable contributions; not suffering any good work of this sort which has been begun amongst you, to cease and come to nothing. Without apostolical authority, we should never have hazarded the expression here used, "God is not unrighteous, that he "should forget;" as if we might even deem him *unjust*, if he should not remember works of charity done to himself in the persons of the poor.—Thus every thing contributes to establish the gracious declaration in my text, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these "my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

I ask your pardon—I have omitted a word—it runs, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto *the least* "of these my brethren." Not men and women only, grown persons, are meant; children also are included; the least of these. *They* are not left out of the account by our Lord, in his promises and as-

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surances of mercy: "Suffer little children to come "to me: it is not the will of my Father, that one of "these little ones should perish." Though the youngest, and the least, they are still the *brethren* of the Redeemer. They share *his* love; let them share *yours*. "A cup of cold water only given to one of "these little ones in the name of a disciple, shall in "no wise lose its reward."

But it is in *your* power to give them much more. You *have* given them much more: you *have* ministered; continue still to minister. Through your bounty it is, that they now appear in this sacred place; their bodies neatly clothed, their minds duly instructed, and qualified with us to worship our God in the beauty of holiness. A pleasant and confortable sight it is to behold. The world cannot show us one that is more so. Consider them as fully included in the case before us. They are *in want;* and they bear a near *relation* to Christ. They can hardly be thought, at this tender age, to have forfeited the high privileges of their baptism, in which they were made "members of Christ, children of God, and "heirs of the kingdom of heaven." And much, indeed, may it depend upon you, whether they ever *do* forfeit them; the great design of these excellent institutions being to afford them opportunities of instruction, which their friends are unable to give or procure for them; to ground them well in such religious principles as may render them good and useful members of society, conduct them safe through a world of temptations, and bring them to never-ending glory. But the support of the institution which is

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to do this for them, depends upon your farther bounty. On this, destitute of every other help, they, under the providence of God, rely; on *you* their eyes and hopes are fixed, for the continuance of every advantage: and every advantage they enjoy will be continued to them, by the liberality of all such among you as shall duly meditate upon the affecting scene I have been endeavouring to represent.

This affecting scene you will as surely see, these affecting words of the great Judge you will as surely hear, as he who has declared you shall see and hear them, is faithful and true.

One thing only remains to be mentioned, that He who shall address those on the right hand in the gracious language of the text, shall afterward say also to "them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye "cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil "and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye "gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave "me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took "me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick "and in prison, and ye visited me not." On *their* asking, likewise, *when* he was seen of them in any of these afflicting circumstances, and they had thus ungratefully denied him relief, he shall answer them; "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did "it not to *me*." The final separation is then to be made, and that gulf fixed between them which cannot be passed; "And these"—such as had neglected to perform works of charity—"these shall

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"go away into everlasting punishment; but the righ-
"teous," they who had performed them, "into life
"eternal." The brethren of Christ are before you—
Make your choice.

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DISCOURSE VIII.

THE PARALYTIC HEALED.

MATTHEW, IX. 2.

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

THE active and elementary parts of nature, wheresoever they exist, will manifest themselves by their effects; fire will warm, light will shine, aromatics will send forth sweet odours. Jesus in like manner, on all occasions, discovers himself to be what his name implies, the SAVIOUR; leaving behind him, in every place, the warmth of fervent charity, the light of evangelical doctrine, and the fragrance of a good report concerning something done for the benefit of man, and the glory of God. He goeth about, not to gratify or to profit himself, but to diffuse his beneficence. He either teaches, or comforts, or raises from the dead; or heals, or feeds, or delivers, or departs into solitude to pray. And all for us. For us he preaches, that we may learn the truth; for us he heals, and performs other miracles, that we may

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believe him; for us no less he retires, for us he prays, for us he gives thanks to his Father. Thus he changes his situation often, his disposition never; in this, as well as other things, "leaving us an example, that "we should follow his steps," and not suffer any outward difference of circumstances to make us forget our Christian profession.

The *Gergesenes*, as we find by the conclusion of the preceding chapter, preferring the preservation of their swine to the salvation of their souls, and, therefore, "desiring him to depart out of their coasts; he "entered into a ship, and passed over, and came "into his own city, Capernaum," *i. e.* the city not where he was born, but where he lived; a trafficking, luxurious, proud city; and for that reason, as mercy looks out for the miserable, and a physician for them that are sick, chosen by him; who, though the only man that ever was without sin, disdained not to dwell and converse with sinners, seeing he came to call such to repentance.

Here it was that he performed the miracle mentioned in the text, which it is the design of the following discourse first to *illustrate*, and then to *apply*.

It being, "noised about," as St. Mark in his account informs us, "that Jesus was returned to *Ca*-"*pernaum*, and was in a certain house in the town, "straightway many were gathered together, inso-"much that there was no room to receive them, no "not so much as about the door; and he," who always rejoiced much more to teach than any could do to learn of him, "preached the word" of life and

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salvation "to them." The sermon was with authority and power, and the audience very attentive.

But *behold* (for so St. Matthew introduces this miracle, and well worthy our *beholding* it will appear to be), an object on a sudden presented itself, which quickly engaged the notice of the speaker, no less than that of the hearers. A bed, with a poor wretch confined to it by the palsy, was seen descending from the roof, till it came down into the room and rested, where all that want rest must find it, at the feet of Jesus. Some good neighbours and friends of this unhappy man, it seems, who by the nature of his disease was rendered incapable of helping himself, were so kind as to carry him between four of them where they knew he might have relief. For it is plain by the pains they took, that they had no doubt but Christ could and would heal him, if they could only contrive to place such a spectacle before his eyes. But here was the difficulty; for upon bringing their burden to the house, they found such a crowd of people, even about the door, that there was no room for a single person more to get in, much less for four with so ponderous and cumbrous a load. Men were not to be torn by any means from the lips of so eloquent a preacher, but were listening at the very doors and windows, to catch, if it were possible, somewhat of his doctrine. Such was, and such ever ought to be, the vehement and unfeigned desire of hearing Christ's word whenever it is preached.

What therefore is to be done? Shall they give it over, and return without having accomplished that for which they came? A lukewarm charity would

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have done so, contenting itself with the effort it had made, and concluding it impossible to do any thing more. But these men were not to be discouraged. They thought therefore of an expedient, and immediately put it in practice; the relation of which we cannot so well understand, without considering that the houses in the Eastern countries were built very low, and with a flat roof, in which there was a kind of trap-door, as the inhabitants often used to go up from within, and spend some time upon the "house "top," where we find "David walking," and "St. "Peter praying." The friends of the sick man therefore having contrived to raise the bed to the roof, (as it was not unusual to have a passage likewise by stairs on the outside of the house), they broke open the afore-mentioned door that was therein (fastened probably on the inside), and let down the bed, suspended by ropes, into the midst of the assembly, before Jesus.

Behold, then, this sad spectacle—not so properly a man as a corpse. Of motion the disease deprived him; and without the power of motion what is life? what avails it to have limbs, if they cannot be used? Nor does this distemper affect the extreme and exterior parts of the body only, but the tongue is tied, and the head disordered. The understanding is benumbed; the memory becomes like a leaky vessel, and loses all that was committed to it; the judgement is naught, and the vigour of the mind perished. Many diseases are noisome, many painful, but still the use of the limbs is not taken away; and in most the soul is still at liberty to perform her operations.

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But the object before us was deprived by the palsy of both. There he lies, those that carried him looking down from above, and the eyes of all in the room, we may be sure, fixed upon him. He falls not on his knees; he lifts not up his hands; he opens not his mouth; but his helpless condition was more effectual than if he had kneeled, his silence more eloquent than any prayer he could have put up. In the ears of *mercy* nothing speaks so powerfully as *misery*.

The meek and gracious Redeemer was not at all offended at being thus interrupted, but highly approves the *faith* of those who had such confidence in him, as to let no difficulties and discouragements prevent their laying the sick man at his feet, in order to the obtaining of a cure. So much doth an operating, steady, persevering faith avail, not only for ourselves, but likewise for our poor sick brethren and neighbours; whom it is our duty to present to Christ by our prayers, as the friends of the man sick of the palsy presented him. For here is nothing mentioned about *his* faith, but only that of his *bearers*—"Jesus seeing *their* faith." And we have in St. James a promise of success made more particularly to the prayers of the priests in such cases:—"Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders "of the church, and let them pray over him; and "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and "the Lord shall raise him up." But the duty of interceding for the afflicted—incumbent on all—cannot be more forcibly recommended than by this circumstance of the miracle before us. Nor indeed will it ever be known, till the day of judgement, how

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many thousand blessings, both temporal and spiritual, have been brought down by the effectual fervent prayers of the faithful, on the heads of such as, like the poor paralytic, could not pray for themselves.

And now it might be expected that Jesus would, by the word of his power, command the sick man immediately to arise and walk." But, instead of addressing him upon the subject of his bodily disorder, he says to him—" Son be of good cheer; thy " sins be forgiven thee." Here was the proof of an able and experienced physician, who would not skin the wound over, but strike directly at the root, and remove the cause of the malady, which was SIN. For had man never *sinned*, he had never been *sick*. Sickness is a part of the curse inflicted on disobedience; and thither the holy Psalmist has taught us to recur in all our visitations, saying, " When thou " with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest " his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth " fretting a garment." " Every man therefore," because every man has sinned, "is but vanity," a creature of no stability and strength, but presently fretted and worn down by sickness, as the best and fairest cloth is when the moth has once got into it. He, therefore, that would be healed of his sickness, should apply for the pardon of his sins. And to whom should he go for a perfect cure of both, but to him who first " said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be for- " given thee;" and then—" Arise, take up thy bed, " and go to thine house."

But, alas! the remission of sins by Jesus Christ,

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though the greatest and most glorious of all the divine mercies, and the ground and foundation of the rest, yet being not, like a cure wrought on the body, outward, and visible, and perceivable by the senses, is often lightly set by and scoffed at by proud and worldly men. As in the case before us, no sooner had Christ said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," but "certain of the Scribes and Pharisees," who were present, "began to reason in their hearts—Who is "this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive "sins but God only?" Who indeed! But does it follow, thou blind and envious Pharisee, that he blasphemeth who came into the world, as the law and the prophets foretold he should, to "save his "people from their sins," and who showed himself possessed of almighty power by the works he daily and hourly wrought in the streets of Jerusalem! It is true, doubtless, that God only can forgive sins. But why, then, is not the only just and right conclusion drawn, viz. that he who does forgive them by his own power, and who demonstrates to sense that he does so, by removing the pains and penalties inflicted on their account—that he, I say, is *very* God, though he appears in the form of a man—"God manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of "the devil?"

But such was the exceeding hardness of these men's hearts, that though Christ vouchsafed to them two most convincing proofs of his divinity, yet neither so believed they on him. First, he answered to their *thoughts*, thereby showing himself to be one "who searcheth the heart and reins," the peculiar

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prerogative of God. "Jesus knowing their thoughts, "said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Secondly, by releasing the sick man, in a moment and by a word speaking, from a disease inflicted as a punishment for sin, he demonstrated to all the world the authority and power he had to pronounce the sentence, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." "Whe-"ther," says he, "is it easier to say, Thy sins are "forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk?" Both, blessed Jesus, are equally impossible to any one but a God of almighty power and infinite mercy, who first made man, and then redeemed him. Such, therefore, we acknowledge thee to be, who saidst—"That ye may know that the Son of man hath power "on earth to forgive sins—Arise, take up thy bed, and "go to thine house," *i. e.* You shall see a divine power go along with my words to heal an outward and visible disease of the body, that ye may no longer doubt of the same divine power going along with them to work the inward and spiritual cure of the soul by the remission of sins. Accordingly, no sooner were the words spoken, but the sick man instantly "arose, took up that whereon he lay, and "departed to his house," no longer mute, but "glori-"fying God," perhaps in the words of the hundred and third psalm, for words better adapted to his case cannot be conceived—"Praise the Lord, O my "soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his "benefits; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth "all thine infirmities." Can a miracle be more complete, more glorious than this? What have the

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Pharisees to say? Do they yet doubt whether this man's sins are forgiven him; and whether God is in Jesus to forgive them? They are silent, as if the palsy, like Naaman's leprosy cleaving to Gehazi, when it left the man had seized upon them, and the opening of his mouth had been the closing of theirs. But as our Lord once said, that if his disciples were to be silent, the very stones would cry out, rather than that God should want the honour due unto his name; so though these men, swelling with malice and envy, sat speechless, neither willing to commend nor able to find fault, yet the hearts of the common people, more generous and open to conviction, were touched at once upon seeing the paralytic leap off his bed, whole and sound, and walk away with it upon his shoulders—"And they were all amazed, and said, We have seen "strange things to-day"—we never saw it on this fashion. "And they glorified God:" which that we may all be the more effectually moved to do, let us,

2dly, Make an application of this miracle to ourselves.

For it must be considered, that bodily diseases, as they were introduced by sin, so are they pictures and representations of corresponding disorders produced by the same sin in our souls, which thereby became subject to the *fever* of anger, the *dropsy* of covetousness, the *leprosy* of uncleanness, the *lunacy* of ambition, and, among other maladies, to the *palsy* of spiritual sloth and listlessness in things pertaining to the work of our salvation. This is the last of those called "the seven deadly sins;" and when it seizes upon the man, it takes away the use of his powers

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and faculties in matters spiritual, exactly as the palsy does in matters temporal. His nerves are unstrung, and he is under an absolute inability to work out his salvation, and walk in the way of God's commandments. His hands can neither be lifted up to heaven in devotion, nor stretched out to the poor in charity. His feet cannot support or carry him forward in a course of holy duties. His tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, when it should utter prayers or praises to God, or instruct and comfort, reprove or exhort his neighbour. His understanding is likewise dull and heavy, when the doctrines of salvation are proposed to it; his memory retaineth not divine truths; and the vigour of his spirit is departed. His will is chained down to the creature, nor can by any human means be disengaged from the earth; and, what is worst of all, the man labouring under this mental or intellectual palsy, and brought down by it to gates of eternal death, seems to himself all the while to thrive and flourish, because he has perhaps riches, and honours, and pleasures in possession, and can bask himself in the sunshine of this world, saying to his poor soul in this most wretched condition, "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; "take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But suffer not, O man, the world and the good things thereof to deceive thee to thy destruction. They may increase the disorder, and hasten thy miserable end. Thy true condition can only be judged of by the state of thy soul. Turn thine eyes inward, and see whether the description just given belongs to it. If it does, then behold and acknowledge thy picture

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in "the man sick of the palsy lying on a bed;" and thou wilt presently cry out, if thou art not quite overcome of the distemper, "O wretched man that "I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this "death?" I answer—yea, thou wilt return answer to thyself, if thou considerest this miracle aright—"I "thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

For, by the wonderful cure wrought upon the body of this poor man, we are taught where to have recourse when the palsy has seized the soul. He who said, "Arise and walk," said likewise, "Thy sins "be forgiven thee;" and his word was with equal power in both cases. Nor is it possible that he who vouchsafed to heal the more base and ignoble part of man, his body, should neglect his precious and immortal soul. All, therefore, that are spiritually "sick of the palsy" must apply to Christ. No difficulties and discouragements must deter them. Somehow or other they must appear before him, or else they perish. If they are not able to go to him of themselves by repentance and faith, let them beg the assistance of kind and charitable friends, who may direct and convey them to him by godly counsel and advice, and by their prayers. More especially "let them send for the elders of the church," whose continual employment it is to present sinners to Christ, and who, like the friends of the man sick of the palsy, should never desist from their labour of love, but use a holy violence in their endeavours, till they have laid their patients at the feet of Jesus, and prevailed for a cure. And surely, if the Son of man on earth, in his mortal and afflicted state of humiliation, had

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power to forgive sins, with how much greater confidence may sinners approach him now that he has died and risen again for them, and sitteth on the throne of glory and grace, invested with all the rights and powers of a priest and intercessor for evermore? Most certainly, whosoever cometh, or is brought to him, in full faith and confidence of his mercy and power, as GOD THE SAVIOUR, shall in no wise be cast out, but shall be made whole of his plague. He shall hear the voice of Jesus saying to him by his word, by the absolution of the church, and the testimony of his conscience through the Holy Ghost —"Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven "thee. Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine "house." And,

Lastly, my brethren, the reality of the cure of the spiritual palsy will be demonstrated to all the world, exactly as that performed upon the body of the paralytic was by what followed when Christ had spoken these words to him: "Straightway he arose, "took up that whereon he lay, and" (regardless of the censures and calumnies of the Scribes and Pharisees) "departed to his house, glorifying God," the people around him doing the same. This will be the process with every one, who, by the mighty power and infinite mercy of the Redeemer, is healed, upon application to him, of his inability to good, his sloth and listlessness, his criminal attachment to the creature. He will *arise* forthwith, and, as it were, stand upright, showing that he now enjoys the use of his powers and faculties, and is in a posture to execute the will of God. "He who cannot rise and

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"stand upright, but either continues groveling on the "earth, or falls back as soon as he gets up, is not "yet cured of his spiritual palsy. The sinner's *bed* "is every thing which he loves, and in which he finds "his rest and satisfaction upon earth; his criminal "inclinations, and the objects of his passions: a "true conversion *takes up* and carries away every "thing of this nature.[a]" And now being thus arisen, in some sort, from the dead, the man begins to lead a new life, a life of vigour and activity, setting forward in the path of life, the way of God's commandments, to "go to his house," not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Nor will he suffer himself to be stopped in his progress by the sneers, and scoffs, and calumnies of those who have in them the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, and are ever ready to detract from the glory of Christ, and to laugh at the remission of sins and the conversion of the sinner. None of those things will move the true penitent from his purpose, or prevent his "glorifying "God," openly and before men, for his mercy and goodness towards him in his redemption from the guilt and power of sin through his Saviour Christ, both God and man. The consequence of which will be, that others will be led thereby to give glory to the God of heaven, for the mighty and wonderful work that he hath done, in restoring health and salvation to a diseased and lost soul. For, surely, nothing but great blindness of mind, want of faith, and love of this life, can make men rejoice more at a

[a] Quesnell.

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bodily cure, than at the conversion of a soul from sin to righteousness; a work, which is indeed spiritual and invisible, and for that reason perhaps the less regarded; but it is a work that far surpasses all the miracles wrought upon matter—a work, to accomplish which, the Son of God died; and to celebrate which, the angels tune their golden harps to everlasting hallelujahs—"Christ Jesus came into the "world to save sinners:" and "there is joy in heaven "among the angels of God, over one sinner that re-"penteth." Which joy, therefore, let us labour to increase, while it is in our power, by arising from all sloth and inactivity of spirit, and walking in all holiness and righteousness, without being weary or faint in our minds, until we come to the home and house of eternal rest, through him who says to every true penitent and sincere believer, in the person of the "man sick of the palsy—Son, be of good cheer: "thy sins be forgiven thee. Arise, take up thy bed, "and go to thine house." To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, &c.

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DISCOURSE IX.

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY.

PSALM LXXXVII. 2.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

WHEN we take a view of the revolutions [a] that have happened in the kingdoms of the world, and behold mighty empires successively rising and disappearing again, like so many waves in this great and wide sea, where, exalted for a little season to the highest pitch of grandeur, they glitter in the sunshine of prosperity, till they are overwhelmed and absorbed by the growing power of some neighbouring people, who themselves are scarcely gazed at, before

[a] Equidem paradoxum quid dixero; et nihilominus vere: Imperia omnia mundi secundum Dei Providentiam sic fuisse ordinata, ut subservirent consilio Dei erga ecclesiam, nec eorum dissolutionem aut destructionem alio referendam; ut proinde eorum destructio, qualis fuit Persarum, certo fuerit argumentum, illud non satisfecisse consilio Dei erga ecclesiam; nec populum suum æquitate, justitia, et indulgentia tractasse, qua par erat.
VITRINGA, Comment. in Zach. i. 20. p. 203.

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they depart and give way to others, as others did to them; we are led thereby to admire and adore the providence of Him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, who putteth down one and setteth up another, ordering all things according to the counsel of his own will. But when from the Scriptures of truth we learn what the counsel of that will is, and how gracious an aspect it bears towards the servants of the true God; when we see all things, even the most untractable, working together for good to them that believe, and the powers of the earth made subservient to the kingdom of the Messiah, in carrying on the divine dispensations of mercy and judgement towards the church, as her obedience pleads for the one, or her trangressions call for the other, how are our hearts filled and warmed with a sense of his goodness, who makes the world and all the persons and things in it to conspire to promote the felicity of his chosen, who governs the universe as head of his church, "who loveth the gates of Zion more than all "the dwellings of Jacob!"

It shall be my endeavour, in the following discourse, to set before you a succinct view of the divine economy in the government of the world, considered in this light, viz. as relative to the affairs of the church. The mercies we this day commemorate will close an induction of particulars, and the use we are to make of them be the natural and obvious result of the whole.

But shall we not be said to aggrandize the church, to think of her more highly than we ought to think, when we thus represent the kings of the earth as minister-

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ing unto her, and put all things, as it were, under her feet? This may be said. But it will be said by none who have duly weighed the difference between things temporal and things eternal, and have learned to give the preference where it is so evidently due. The commission of political government extends no farther than this world. Every man's death dissolves his relation to an earthly kingdom, and all civil distinctions drop into the dust together. But, as says the apostle, ημων πολιτευμα, "our citizenship, is in heaven," from whence St. John saw the Christian church, "that "holy city, the new Jerusalem, descend," and whither she will again be received up; nay, whither she is continually ascending, the triumphant part of her, as well as her all-glorious head, being there already. Hence it is, that the church even upon earth is styled "the kingdom of God;" the spirits departed and the faithful who remain being alike the subjects of it, and together making up what the apostle calls the whole family of heaven and earth named after Christ; who, as he now ratifies in heaven the sentence of the church when justly inflicted on earth, so will he one day enable her to "execute judgement" on the angels as well as on this world, seeing her head is lord of them all. They are not "members of his "body, of his flesh, and of his bones; for he took "not on him the nature of angels, but he took on "him the seed of Abraham;" to whom "they are all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them "who," through the faith of their father Abraham, "are heirs of salvation." What wonder, then, that we find these exceeding great and precious promises

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made to the church, with relation to the kingdoms of the earth:—"Kings shall be thy nursing fa-
"thers, and queens thy nursing mothers; they shall
"bow down to thee with their face towards the earth,
"and lick up the dust of thy feet. The sons also
"of them that afflicted thee shall come bending
"unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow
"themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they
"shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of
"the Holy One of Israel. Therefore thy gates shall
"be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor
"night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of
"the Gentliles, and that their kings may be brought:
"for the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee
"shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly
"wasted." Thus glorious are the things spoken of thee, thou city of God. May we not then take up our parable like Balaam, and say, Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. How shall we degrade her, whom God hath so highly exalted? How shall we lightly esteem her, whom the King of heaven thus delighteth to honour? We cannot do it, until we have forgotten who it was that died to redeem her.

Let none, therefore, be offended, but rather let all greatly rejoice, and glorify God on this behalf, when they find the affairs of the kingdoms and empires of the earth directed and disposed, by an unseen hand, in such a manner as may best comport with her interests, for whom the world itself was created and is preserved. Her foundations, as they are to last when the world is ended, so were they laid before it began,

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as the Scriptures testify, when they tell us that "we "are saved and called according to the divine pur- "pose, and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the "world began;" when they assure us, that God "hath chosen us from the beginning;" when they style the Gospel "the everlasting covenant," and Christ, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the "world." Creation was posterior to the covenant of grace, and the first step in the execution of it. The world was enjoyed but for a little season by man in his state of innocence, and has ever since sympathized with him in the misery of his fall, but is still preserved as the scene on which the mighty work of his redemption is carrying on, until it be finally accomplished. At that day and hour cometh the end, When the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, and all the Israel of God shall be saved, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.

Nor, indeed, can we proceed far in the sacred history, before we meet with an awful exemplification of this great truth, a stupendous prelude to that final destruction which awaits the world, and to that complete salvation which is then to be wrought for the church. When the earth was defiled by the abominations of its inhabitants, when the sins of men had burst the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and called forth a deluge to cleanse her from her corruptions; when neither the riches of the wealthy, nor the power of the mighty, nor the wisdom of the wise, could save them a single

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moment from the hand of death;—then appeared the inestimable privileges of the faithful, the incomparable pre-eminence of the church. Small and contemptible as she then seemed, being reduced to the holy family in the ark, yet, safe in the protection of her God, she weathered the storm which laid the world in ruins, and rode in triumph over the wreck of universal nature. New heavens, as it were, and a new earth arose, for her sake, out of the confusion of the old; the covenant was renewed; she was bid to look upon the rainbow, and remember the promise; the morning stars once more sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

In the dispersion of the nations from Babel, regard was had to the after disposition of things in the Israelitish church; for which reason Moses begins his song with it: "When the Most High divided to "the nations their inheritance, when he separated "the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the peo-"ple according to the number of the children of "Israel."

Who can read the lives of those fathers of our faith, the ancient patriarchs, "when they were but "few men in number, yea, very few, and strangers "in the land," without perceiving how highly they were accounted of in the sight of God? "He suffer-"ed no man to do them wrong, yea, he reproved "kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine "anointed, and do my prophets no harm." They were honoured in the kingdoms through which they passed as mighty princes of God: when injured, they put to flight through faith the armies of

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aliens; they were suffered to intercede for sinful cities, and such as belonged to the holy family were sent out of the overthrow, when the destruction of those cities, by the enormity of the crimes of the inhabitants, was rendered inevitable: they were made instruments of preserving whole nations alive in the time of dearth, of informing princes concerning the will of Heaven, and teaching senators true wisdom; they were revered by crowned heads, and Pharaoh disdained not to receive a blessing from Jacob.

Egypt, at that time one of the most renowned and mighty kingdoms of the earth, was appointed to be the scene, first of the chastisement, and then of the deliverance of the people of God, by a series of the most astonishing miracles that ever were wrought in favour of Israel. A new king arose, who knew not Joseph, but looked with an evil eye on the prosperity of the church, as likely in time to prove detrimental to the state, forgetting that God protects those who protect her. Worldly wisdom chose rather to risk his displeasure by oppressing her, by setting over her task-masters to afflict her with burthens, and by making the lives of her children bitter with hard bondage. But the sighs and cries of the afflicted church came up before God, and the vengeance of heaven soon demonstrated the folly of the Egyptian politics. The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and made bare his arm in the defence of his people. The wretched monarch still withstood the power which controlled all the operations of nature, and hardened his heart against the goodness which by so doing called him to repentance. The event was, as it ever will be in the

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end, that the church was delivered, and her oppressors destroyed. The Egyptians sank like lead in the mighty waters, while Israel, standing triumphant on the opposite shore, sang hallelujahs to the Lord God omnipotent.

Israel thus brought out of Egypt was conducted through the wilderness, the same Lord being her light and her salvation, her support and refreshment, and came to the borders of Canaan, at the precise time when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and the harvest ready for the sickle. The judgement, therefore, determined was executed upon them by the sword of Joshua, or rather the sword of God in his hand. For as it was Jehovah who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea," and "led his people through the wilderness," so was it he who "smote great nations, and slew mighty kings, Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Basan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan." The promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," was made good. The power of faith prevailed to the casting down of strong holds, and the blast of the trumpets from the mouths of the priests, sounded by divine command, was sufficient to level the walls of Jericho.

After the settlement of the people in the promised inheritance, the nations around them were from time to time made the instruments of punishing them when they rebelled against the Lord their God. When they returned to him, his favour returned to them, the light of his countenance quickly dispelled the darkest clouds of public calamity, and brake

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forth upon them by the means of deliverers raised up to chastise the insolence of their enemies, and restore peace and prosperity to Israel. But the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, of Jepthah, and of David, who having subdued all his enemies, left his son Solomon in a manner universal monarch over the whole earth, all the kings of which, as it is said in the book of Chronicles, sought his presence. And indeed the glory of his reign so far exceeds that of any which we hear of before or after it, that Israel in his days seems intended to give us some idea of the church triumphant, as she will appear when, the last enemy being vanquished, and death swallowed up in victory, the son of David shall manifest himself in the new Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace, and reign for ever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

From this time, we find the Almighty employing, in their turns, the four great monarchies, to protect or annoy, to cherish or chastise the church, as there was occasion. And we hear him making in effect by his prophets the same declaration concerning each of them, that he made before by the mouth of Moses concerning Pharaoh: "In very deed, for this cause "have I raised thee up, to show in thee my power, "and that my name may be declared through all the "earth."

The idolatries and iniquities of the ten tribes, consequent upon their defection from the house of David and the temple at Jerusalem, called for vengeance. And, lo! the Assyrian stands ready to execute it, waiting only for the divine command. At

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the time appointed it is given. The Lord lifteth up an ensign to the nations from afar, and mustereth the hosts to the battle, making them the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land. Because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. They returned no more to that pleasant land, nor saw again their native country. What a fine instance does the Assyrian afford us of the manner in which Providence, using the instrumentality of man's free choice foreseen, causes all the schemes of worldly politicians to work together for the accomplishment of his designs, while they are only attending to their own interests! For thus God states this matter, once for all, by his prophet Isaiah—"O Assyrian, the "rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is "mine indignation. I will send him against an hy-"pocritical nation, and against the people of my "wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, "and to take the prey, and to tread them down "like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth "not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in "his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." The proud Assyrian knew not what Isaiah could have told him, that "when the Lord had performed" by him "his whole work," of correcting his people, he would "punish his stout heart, and the glory of his "high looks;" nor saw the absurdity of "the axe "boasting itself against him that heweth therewith." View him before the walls of Jerusalem, at the head

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of an army presumed to be invincible, opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, and already rioting in the fancied possession and spoil of the holy city. But the time was not yet come. A prince filled the throne who knew where to have recourse for assistance, and how to engage Heaven on his side. Therefore "the virgin, the daughter of Zion, de-"spised" the tyrant, "and laughed him to scorn; "the daughter of Jerusalem shook her head at him." Suddenly, in the dark and silent hour of midnight, without noise or violence, the flower of the Assyrian army is cut off at a stroke. The Almighty puts his hook in the nose, his bridle in the lips of the blaspheming infidel, and leads him back disarmed like a wild beast taken in the toils, the contempt and hissing of those nations, who had so lately trembled at his power and majesty.

But at length Judah's hour came. The transgressions of her kings, of her priests, and of her people, which had made the whole head sick and the whole heart faint, required a strong and efficacious medicine. Her corruptions were become such as could not be purged away but by the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning, and she was to drink deep of the cup of the Lord's fury. The haughty and terrible Nebuchadnezzar was the person appointed to administer it, and she drank it off to the dregs. Jerusalem is laid in ashes, and her children go into captivity. In the school of affliction they are taught the lesson of repentance. By the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept, wept over the miseries of the church, and the sins that caused them; yea, they

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wept when they remembered Zion, when they remembered what she had been, and saw what she was. Desolate and forlorn, she now sits upon the ground, who was once exalted above all the earth, and calls to the whole world to see if ever there was sorrow like her sorrow, and to receive instruction by her fall. Her lamentations by the mouth of Jeremiah are recorded for the use of all who may find themselves in the like circumstances, if they prove not sufficient to prevent men from falling into them. Yet even here God left not himself without witness, nor his church without honour. The irresistible monarch, whose pride made him ready to propose himself as an object of worship to all people, and nations, and languages, falls down at the feet of a Jew; Daniel is made first of the presidents, and a prophet rules in the province of Babylon; while the abasement of that prince, by the judgement of God, even to the condition of the beasts of the field, seemed to prognosticate the fall of the empire, which came to pass in the days of his grandson.

For now, Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, having performed the task allotted her, was to be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah; the staff wherewith the Lord had smitten so many nations, the hammer which had broken the whole earth to pieces, was to be itself cut asunder and broken, and the sceptre of the world transferred to the second great monarchy, that of the MEDES and PERSIANS. To this end we see raised up a prince with a disposition calculated to conciliate the affections of all nations, improved

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and trained up in a discipline which has been the admiration of every age since, reducing to practice all the maxims of political wisdom which he had been taught, and prosperous in all his undertakings, until by the taking of Babylon he had brought down to the ground, and laid low in the dust, that insolent spirit which characterized the Chaldean empire. This transaction profane history relates at large. But the drift of Providence in it had never been known, if the Scriptures had not opened to us, through the divine economy in this affair, a prospect terminated by the restoration of the church of God, who saith of Cyrus, many hundred years before his birth, "He is my "shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even "saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to "the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid. I have "raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct "all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall "let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith "the Lord of hosts. For Jacob my servant's sake, "and for Israel mine elect, I have even called thee "by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou "hast not known me." Accordingly, in the very "first year of his reign," after having been showed, as we must suppose, by Daniel, whom he found in the court of Babylon, these prophecies of Isaiah concerning himself, "he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, "saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the "kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build "him an house in Jerusalem which is in Judah:

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"Who is there among you of all his people? The "Lord his God be with him, and let him go up." For this cause, therefore, was the Persian monarchy suffered to be erected, because Jehovah was become gracious unto his land, and had determined to make Cyrus his instrument in bringing back the captivity of Jacob.

But in process of time this empire having begun, under the tyrant Ochus, to persecute the church which it had till then protected, was not long after broken in pieces by the king of Græcia, or Alexander the Great, the founder of the third monarchy, whose fury against Jerusalem, for refusing the succours he demanded, was on a sudden, at the sight of the high priest coming forth in his vestments at the head of a procession to meet him, turned into a reverence for the temple, and an admiration of the prophecies; in which seeing himself plainly portrayed, he marched on against Darius to certain victory; and having thus performed the work for the execution of which God had raised him up, was thrown aside as a withered rod, dying at Babylon in the 33d year of his age. The carrying away of the Jews to the number of 100,000 into Egypt under Ptolemy Lagos, one of his successors, and the cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes, a descendant of another of them, served only, the former to diffuse the knowledge of the God of Israel among the nations, preparatory to their conversion by the Gospel; the latter to manifest the power of that God, and to call forth the glories of the Asmonean family [a].

[a] See Vitringa in Zach. p. 265.

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In their days, as we find by the book of Maccabees, the first league was made with the Roman power, which was ere long to constitute the fourth and last monarchy, and was now grown strong enough to protect the church against the kings of Syria, as it did for many years. But when the Jews had forsaken the God of their fathers to go after their own traditions, and had at length filled up the measure of their iniquities by rejecting their Messiah, after he had accomplished all their prophecies, crucifying the Lord of glory, and persecuting his apostles; the spirit of life passed from the law into the Gospel, and left their religion a breathless carcass: directed by Heaven, the Roman eagles flew to the prey, and Jerusalem was destroyed with a destruction which astonished the soul of Titus himself, and hath made the ears of every one that hath heard it to tingle, from that day to this[b]. The Roman empire, which, by uniting all nations under its government, prepared the way for the universality of the true religion, having thus been by turns the protector and exterminator of the Jewish, the persecutor and the defender of the Christian church, was itself, like all the empires that had gone before it, broken in pieces, first by its division into Eastern and Western; then by an inundation of the barbarians subdividing it into these

[b] The Gospel, receiving strength from every successive persecution, at length conquered the conquerors of the world; the despised and ignominious cross of the poor afflicted Galilean was engraved upon the foreheads of princes, and became the great ornament and glory of the imperial diadem.

Causes of the Fall of the Roman Empire. Bossuet, ii. 184.

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Western kingdoms, which, though changing occasionally by small accessions or diminutions, still subsist; and lastly, by the Mahometan power, raised up to be the Pharaoh, the Nebuchadnezzar, and the Antiochus Epiphanes of these last days to the Eastern churches. And if the princes of this Western division should go on to weaken and destroy each other, while nothing is done to revive the spirit and power of the Gospel in Christendom (for when they are departed, a mere name will avail us as little as it did the Jews, or the Greek Christians), may it not be feared that the Western empire will one day follow the fate of the Eastern, and the crescent be seen flying on the towers of Vienna, as well as on those of Constantinople! since it seems hardly to admit of a doubt, that the Mahometan empire is the last and great antichristian power, raised and supported to be the scourge of apostate Christians; which, when it shall have performed the task allotted it, the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming; when the kingdoms of this world shall finally become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and the superiority of his church over them all shall be as visible as it is certain.

Thus, by going into the sanctuary of God, we see the end of all earthly glory, and behold the empires of the world passing swiftly by us, and vanishing away, to give place to that kingdom which shall endure for ever; while God, by suffering them to continue no longer than he had occasion to employ them in the service of the church, gives us a clear evidence that they were raised up for this end. It is here that

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we are to look for the secret spring of all victories and overthrows; here we are to search after the true cause of the rise and ruin of states; which, with the renowned conductors of them, whether in peace or in war, are but so many instruments in the hand of Heaven, to execute its designs of mercy or judgement on the church, and on each other in subordination to her, as they respectively from time to time become the objects of either, according to the uniform tenour of the divine economy from the beginning to the end of the world.

With regard to this nation in particular, and the manner in which the designs of Providence concerning the church have been brought about by the revolutions that have happened in the state, it is obvious to observe, that as the conquest of Britain by the Romans opened a way for the Gospel to visit it at first, so the invasion of it afterwards by the Saxons, who, having overcome the sinful inhabitants, were themselves converted to the faith by Austin, became a means of the revival and re-establishment of that Gospel. At the head of the many blessings since bestowed upon us will that of this day for ever stand, in the estimation of all those who have pleasure in the prosperity of Sion; who love to behold her in her apostolical form and comeliness, as she appeared in the days of old, and in the years that are past, before schism had mangled and heresy defaced the beauty of holiness. In God's dealings with the church of England, restored as at this time by the restoration of the royal family, we behold an epitome of his former proceedings with regard to the church in

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general. We behold a power raised up to afflict and chastise her, and then destroying itself to pave the way for her deliverance and recovery. But some circumstances there are which distinguish this dispensation, and deserve to be carefully marked. The avenger came not upon us from without, but arose from amongst ourselves. It was not an open enemy that did us this dishonour, for then we could have borne it. The sorrow only had then been ours. But, alas! the guilt was so too. The assault was made, not as formerly, by heathen and infidel powers, in professed opposition to the Gospel, but by some who (if the people would take their word for it) were the only true Gospel preachers; and who, by a strange inversion of Scripture, having appropriated to themselves the character of the Israel of God, applied all the prophecies concerning Egypt, Babylon, and the other enemies of Israel, to the church and the monarchy. The grand secret of this most detestable enthusiasm (and indeed the case is the same with every other species of it) was the art of setting up Christ against his own laws, and superseding external ordinances by fanciful internal revelations. The truth is, a spirit of schism and a spirit of faction, meeting in the same hearts, formed at this period of time a set of the most accomplished rebels against the kingdom and priesthood of Jesus Christ, as delegated to his representatives in church and state. But the battery raised for the demolition of both was masked with such an hypocrisy as the world never saw before, nor, it is to be hoped, will ever see again. Under the words *liberty* and *reformation* lay con-

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cealed the mine which at length blew up the constitution from its foundations. Mankind beheld with astonishment the parliamentary cannon pointed against the king, for the security of his person; the Christian church overturned to introduce the reign of Jesus; and the saints, as they blasphemously styled themselves, inheriting the earth, instead of its right owners, to show their heavenly mindedness. Then the mystery of iniquity stood unfolded, and the eyes of the unwary, who had at first followed Absalom in the simplicity of their hearts, were opened. But it was too late. They could only reflect (and teach their children to reflect in time) upon the truth of the wise man's aphorism, and the excellency of the advice grounded upon it: "The beginning of strife "is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave "off contention before it be meddled with." They plainly discerned, that he who said, "Let every soul "be subject unto the higher powers," understood the nature of government, and knew upon what principles alone it could be supported; since the remedy of rebellion proved (as it always will) to be infinitely worse than the disease of mal-administration; and the little finger of a commonwealth was found to be heavier than the loins of monarchy; the nation (besides the destruction of the best of churches, and the unparalleled murder of the best of kings), having suffered more, beyond all comparison, in the space of twenty years, from the tyranny of the pretended patriots, than from the despotism of all the princes who had ever worn the imperial crown of England. But as the infatuated self-willedness of rebels disposes them to suffer,

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so the justice of God generally ordains that they shall suffer more and worse things from the usurper whom they themselves set up, than they ever could have done from their lawful sovereign; and accordingly they who dashed in pieces the gracious sceptre of a Stuart, were scourged with the iron rod of a Cromwell.

But this rod of the oppressor, when by it the Lord had visited the transgressions of his people, was at length broken. The prayers of the faithful remnant prevailed; and he who created and preserves the world for the sake of his church; he who secured her in the ark when the flood came, and watched over her in the families of the patriarchs; he who brought her forth out of Egypt, led her through the wilderness, settled her in the promised inheritance, and made her to be the glory of the whole earth; he who raised up Cyrus to deliver her from the power of Babylon; who turned the heart of Alexander in her favour; who went forth with Judas and his brethren to the battle against the armies of Antiochus; and bade the sword of Constantine conquer under the banner of the *cross;* the same Lord who is rich unto all that call upon him, because his mercy endureth for ever, heard the groanings of the church of England under her captivity; and having sent a spirit of dissension and confusion amongst the builders of the schismatical and republican Babel, he opened the eyes of the people to see that there was only one way of putting a period to the miseries of their country; and, at a time when it was least hoped for, and by an instrument least suspected, he bowed

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the hearts of the whole nation as the heart of one man, "so that they sent this word unto the king, "Return thou, and all thy servants." So the king returned, and the church was delivered out of the hands of her enemies. Therein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. Nor shall the voice of praise grow cold in our mouths, though a hundred years are now elapsed since the day when this mercy was vouchsafed unto us; but seeing that thereby we have once more beheld Sion in her beauty, we will give thanks unto our Lord God, as if the king had this morning made his triumphant entry, amidst the acclamations of his exulting subjects, "impatient," as the noble historian expresses it, "to fill their eyes with a beloved spec-"tacle, of which they had been so long deprived."

The result of the whole is this. If the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, so should we. If, in the revolutions of states and empires, his eyes are upon the church, ours should be there too, according to the example set us by the faithful of old time; who being led into captivity, "wept when they remembered Sion;" being redeemed therefrom, "were glad when" their brethren said unto them, "Let us go into the house of "the Lord." If God's dealings with a people are regulated by their dealings with his church, then the state of the church is always the best criterion whereby to judge of the true state of the nation where she is planted; and there are no greater enemies to their country than those who endeavour to alienate the minds of kings from her; since he who cannot lie hath said concerning her, "No weapon that is

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"formed against thee shall prosper, and every "tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou "shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the serv-"ants of the Lord. Those that honour me I will "honour; and such as despise me shall be lightly "esteemed. Let them all be confounded and turn-"ed back, that hate Sion." For her prosperity, therefore, we and all the world ought to pray, as the Psalmist most earnestly entreateth every one of us to do:—"O pray for the peace of Jerusalem," because "they shall prosper that love thee." *Peace*, then, O thou city of God, the peace of union and charity "be within thy walls, and plenteousness" of grace and glory "within thy palaces." And while we thus pray for the church with our lips, let it be our unfeigned endeavour to adorn her by our lives. So shall we make the proper return for the mercies we have received; so shall we draw down more and more of the divine favour continually upon our king and our country, the university and ourselves; so shall we convince the world of this great and important truth, that the Christian is the loyal subject, and the churchman the true patriot.

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DISCOURSE X.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

JOHN, VIII. 7.

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

A WRITER of great note in the philosophical and medical world tells us, that he never saw a criminal dragged to execution without asking himself, "Who "knows whether this man is not less blameable than I "am?" a question which we should all of us do well to ask ourselves, when we hear of, or see, any person brought to shame and punishment for sin. The sufferings of others might thus turn greatly to our advantage, by humbling and leading us likewise to repent of our transgressions, which, perhaps, equally deserve the rod, and escape only by not being known. On the contrary, the falls of our brethren too often produce no other effect in us than pride and uncharitableness. We are pleased to think it is not so bad with us, and criticise without mercy upon characters which, take them for all in all, are perhaps not worse than our own. What the behaviour of people generally is upon such an occasion, and what it should be, we are shown in the chapter of which

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the text is a part, where we read of a person taken in a grievous offence, and brought by the Scribes and Pharisees to Christ. I shall, therefore, go over this whole history, and make some suitable remarks on each part of it.

As our Lord was teaching in the temple, "the "Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman "taken in adultery; and when they had set her in "the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman "was taken in adultery, in the very act."

There is in human nature (however we are to account for it) a great curiosity to discover, and an equal desire to publish, the faults and infirmities of others. Some spend half their time in inquiring and listening after all that is stirring in this way. Not a breath of wind but strikes their ear, if it be loaded with scandal. And then when once they have heard a story, which demolishes a reputation, how eager they are to make it known to their acquaintance! Tidings like these are frequently uttered with as much joy and triumph, as if the event were the best that ever befel the utterers in their lives. But how is this? Are they the better for their neighbour's crimes; or can they really take a pleasure in the thought, that a fellow-creature, and one of the same religion, has been seduced to offend God, and is in danger, without his grace, of perishing eternally? Does this delight their hearts, and make their eyes sparkle? Evil spirits rejoice at the fall and destruction of mankind; but angels mourn, and so should we. Let them suppose their own relations or themselves in the same situation, and then see how their

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behaviour appears; and let them learn, that sin, which pierced the heart of their Saviour upon the cross, can afford no matter of joy and triumph to any of his disciples. Let them be as diligent in searching after their own sins, to confess and amend them, as they have been in searching out those of their neighbours, to publish and expose them. They will find work enough, and work that will reward their labour.

"This woman," say the Scribes and Pharisees, "was taken in adultery"—a foul and deadly transgression, but not the only one in the world. When we see the woman "standing in the midst," put to open shame, and hear these men accusing her, what holy and good men are we led to think them? What haters of sin? How zealous for God and religion? They, to be sure, are quite pure and meek, and pious and charitable. Alas! how mistaken should we be, if we thus judged of them! Some pains, doubtless, have been employed to white-wash the sepulchres, and the outsides of them make a very creditable appearance. But let us only approach, and uncover them, and we shall soon be taught, that it is not always safe to *judge according to appearance*. For this wretched criminal is brought forth, not for the punishment of sin, and the glorification of God,—but merely to lay a trap for Christ, that he might be accused, persecuted, and put to death.—

"Moses in the law commanded us, that such "should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" The design was, to set Moses and Christ at variance, and they thought they had laid their snare in such a man-

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ner that Christ must fall into it either way. For if he contradicted Moses, by ordering the woman to be released, they would have set him down for a false prophet; and if, with Moses, he sentenced her to death, he must have acted contrary to his character of a merciful Saviour. So, you see, these Scribes and Pharisees, while they were clamouring for vengeance against adultery, forgot there were any such sins as envy, hatred, and malice, and perceived not that they themselves were all the time in the gall of bitterness. The woman had broken one commandment; but these her accusers were overturning the foundations of the whole law, mercy, justice, and truth. So easy is it for men who are not upon their guard, even while they are exerting themselves against some kinds of sins, to run into others; nor indeed can we be greatly surprised, that they, who give up their whole attention to the concerns of their neighbours, should sometimes a little neglect their own.

The sight of a sinner discovered and brought to shame, might be a very useful and improving sight to those who behold it. But men have several ways of making it to themselves an occasion of falling.

Some think it a proper subject of laughter, and Solomon tells who they are—not remarkable for their *wisdom*—"Fools," says he, "make a mock at "sin." For what is there in sin to make a mock at? It is thought a very serious matter in heaven, and will be found so in hell. Why then should it be made a jest of upon earth? It ruined mankind, and brought death into the world. And is there any

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thing humorous in that consideration? As little merriment can there be in the nature of confession and repentance, whereby the sinner is delivered from the wrath to come. In the primitive ages, such a subject was never touched upon without concern and grief. But now, people have much ado to keep their countenances, and forbear laughing. So strangely are the times altered! in other words, ignorance has taken place of knowledge, and folly sits on the throne of wisdom.

Others there are, who, when they hear of a sinner discovered and exposed, bless themselves to think, how good and righteous they are; ready to cry out with the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee that I am "not as other men are." May be not; though we have only your own word for it, which many, perhaps, will not take. You are not, indeed, brought to shame or punishment; but, have you never deserved to be so? Recollect a little. If not, have you ever been in the same circumstances of temptation? or, are you sure, that in those circumstances you should not have fallen? Who is it that hath preserved you all this time? Give the glory to God, and learn to have pity, like him, on those whose strength failed in the day of trial. Otherwise, under the show of great zeal for virtue and religion, you may display as much pride, uncharitableness, and hypocrisy, as the Scribes and Pharisees did of old, when they brought the woman before our Saviour, only that they might ensnare him.

But let us not be deceived, as they were. God is not mocked. He knew their craft, and saw through

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their design. Their hearts were open to him, and he viewed distinctly all that was passing there. It was not his intention to destroy the law of Moses, for he came to fulfil it; nor would he condemn sinners, for he came to save them. At the same time, he would teach these men, that there were sins known to God, which the law did not reach to punish here, and that those ought to be avoided as well as these; since there was nothing secret which would not be known at the last day: that people who were fond of accusing and punishing others, or of seeing them accused and punished, should therefore look at home, and examine how matters stood in their own breasts, how they should like to have the story of their lives told aloud, and the thoughts of their hearts revealed to the world. This would soon cure that desire, with which so many are infected, of knowing and publishing the faults of their neighbours; it would make them treat their weak and fallen brethren as they themselves would wish to be treated by the Judge of all the earth.

Such being our Saviour's intention, he seemed at first to take no notice of what was said, but stooping down, he wrote with his finger on the ground. They now thought they had perplexed him, and that he knew not how to answer their question. They pressed him, therefore, more earnestly, and continued asking, till at length he raised himself, and thus addressed them—"He that is without sin among you, let "him first cast a stone at her."

As if he had said, in other words—"You have "brought before me a person taken in a grievous

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"crime, and you tell me, Moses in the law com-
"manded, that such should be stoned. If he did
"command this, why do you come to me? Truly, for
"no reason, but to tempt and ensnare me. You would
"appear to be good and holy men, haters of sin, zeal-
"ous for the honour of God and his law. But your
"design all the while is to entrap, to persecute, and
"slay me, an innocent person, sent from God to be
"your prophet, your priest, and your king, the pro-
"mised Messias, the Saviour of Israel. The woman,
"it is true, is a sinner; but her accusers are no
"saints, and the world is imposed upon, when it
"takes them for such. I know the rottenness of your
"hearts, and can, when I will, show it to others. I
"shall not condemn the woman myself, for it is not
"mine office. You may do it, if you will affirm
"yourselves to be those righteous men which you
"desire to be accounted. But this you dare not do
"before me, a person who, as you well know, can
"prove the contrary, and give the by-standers such
"a history of what you have been, and what you
"are, as will make you ashamed to show your faces.
"And therefore it is, that I challenge and defy you
"to proceed—He that is without sin among you,
"let him first cast a stone at her." This said,
Christ returned to his former employment of writing
upon the ground, leaving the medicine which he had
administered to perform its operation.

And now behold the mighty force of a few words
—"They which heard it, being convicted by their
"own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at
"the eldest even unto the least; and Jesus was left

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"alone, and the woman standing in the midst." What! are these godly persons gone; all gone; and is the work, upon which they came, left unfinished? It is even so. The criminal alone remains to be seen; her accusers are fled. And reason good. They found there was one ready to accuse them in their turn; they perceived that "all things were "naked and open before him with whom they had to "do;" and they had no mind to have him lay open their hearts, and read a lecture upon them before the people. Their consciences told them what sort of a lecture that must needs be; and, therefore, rather than provoke him to read it, they very prudently made the best of their way out of the temple, and left him to condemn or absolve the woman, as he should think fit.

Whenever, therefore, you find yourselves tempted to be severe upon a neighbour's failings, call to mind what passed between our Lord and the Pharisees. Busy in bringing to light the sins of another, they had entirely forgotten their own; they reflected not, how very unfit they were to be the woman's accusers; they thought not what would become of themselves, when God should arise to judgement. And here is the great misfortune. Heaven has given to every man his portion of work, and every man is doing the work of his brother, instead of that which belongeth to himself. We are all naturally disposed to entertain a pretty good opinion of ourselves. A careful and constant examination of our ways, might chance to spoil that good opinion, and is, for that reason, a task which we are very backward in enter-

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ing upon. But we feel no such pain in examining the ways of our neighbour, and finding him faulty; on the contrary, we are too apt to take pleasure in a comparison sure to be made to our own advantage. But then we are all the while deceived in imagining that our sins are and will be unknown, because we are able, for the present, to hide them from the world about us. The Pharisees accusing the woman in the temple, thought they stood quite secure in the characters which, by a little outward decency, they had acquired, of virtuous and holy men; when, lo, on a sudden, they perceived one present who was privy to all they had been secretly doing and thinking; one who was able to draw their true characters at full length whenever he pleased, and thereby expose them to mankind as a set of hypocrites.

And can we be regardless (for ignorant we cannot be) of the presence of the same divine person amongst us? To him all hearts are open, all desires known; he knoweth our down-sitting and our up-rising, and understandeth our thoughts long before; he is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways. From him bolts and bars cannot secure us, darkness cannot hide our doings; for the darkness is no darkness with him; the night is as clear as the day. Before him lies the register of our lives, in which is noted every thing we have done, every thing we have said, and every thing we have imagined. Should he again appear in the *Temple*, and from these eternal records "reprove us, and set" our secret sins in "order before us," who could abide it, or stay to

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hear the accusation out? He might once more be *left alone.*

Nor let us forget, that, although our God walketh not upon earth to teach and to reprove, as formerly he did in the flesh, yet hath he placed in every breast a representative of himself to sit in judgement, to condemn or to absolve. *Conscience* is always present, standing by, and taking an account of our proceedings, when we think not of it. Great endeavours are used to buy off and to silence this witness. Half the pleasures and amusements of the world are invented and followed, only to drug it, and lay it asleep. And, for a time, they seem to have the desired effect. Old sins appear to be gone and forgotten. While health and prosperity last, the man goes on smoothly, saying to himself with Agag, "Surely the bitterness of death is past;" till at length the lion is roused and let loose upon him, the minister of vengeance seizeth him, and "heweth "him in pieces," when the word is given from above. Such a word was that of Christ to the Pharisees, which could not have affected them, if conscience had not heard and understood it. Awaked by the sound, it started from its slumbers, and, as the officer of justice, apprehended them when they least expected it. Self-accused, self-convicted, self-condemned, they gave all up, and disappeared. Great indeed is the power of conscience, when once it is set to work by him who planted it in the bosom of man. Nothing can withstand it. From the moment it is alarmed, and begins to show a man to

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himself, it will find him so much employment, that he will have little leisure and less inclination to turn accuser of his brethren, or to dwell upon and aggravate their offences. Go into the chamber of him whom sickness and sorrow have brought to a sense of his sins. See with what humility he confesses them, with what earnestness he supplicates for pardon; how entirely taken up he is in settling the affairs of his own soul, and making his peace with God. Tell him that such a neighbour hath fallen into a grievous sin, he will lament, pity, and pray for him. Try to *entertain* and *divert* him upon such a subject, he will think you a wretch not fit to be conversed with, and order you from his presence.—To go one step farther: Suppose the last day to be now come. Imagine you see the Judge upon his throne, the generations of mankind assembled before him, and the books opened, out of which we are all to be judged. Who, in that situation, would have any appetite to revile, insult, or laugh at the transgressions of the man that stood next to him? Whose thoughts would not be employed upon his own case? Who would not be anxious to obtain his own pardon, and leave God to deal as he thought fit with others, hoping and praying that he would be merciful to them likewise? To this temper death and judgement will certainly bring us all; and we must blame ourselves, if in this temper they do not find us.

Having thus despatched the Pharisees, the woman alone remains. She was detained in the temple by the same principle which caused the others to depart—consciousness of guilt. This kept her fixed,

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after her accusers were gone; not daring to stir, till she heard sentence pronounced by Christ, before whom she stood. At length, "Woman," said he to her, raising himself from the ground, on which he had been writing, "where are those thine accusers? "Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, "Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I "condemn thee; go, and sin no more." We are not to think by this, that our Lord meant to excuse guilt, to be the patron of sin, or to find fault with the law of Moses, which was the law of God. By that law adultery was to be punished with death. But the sentence could not be passed without accusers and witnesses, who were all fled. Proper magistrates must pass it; and had they done so, Christ had not interposed to hinder the execution of justice. But they having not condemned her whose proper office it was, no more would Christ, whose office it was not; as he told the brethren who came to him about the division of an inheritance: "Man, who made me a judge and a divider?" He was no temporal magistrate, but came into the world in a very different quality, that of a spiritual Saviour. With respect to the law, he left every thing as it was; he neither condemned nor absolved the woman. But as the publisher of the Gospel, and the author of salvation, he directed her how to obtain the pardon of Heaven and eternal life, viz. by so truly repenting of her sin, as never to return to it again—"Go, and sin no more." Despair not, therefore, O thou, whosoever thou art, whom temptation hath drawn into sin; thou art in the hands of

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one who desireth not the death of a sinner; of one who died for thy sake, to procure thee forgiveness, grace, and glory. Return to him, pray to him, love him, and serve him, all the remaining days of thy life. Let the remembrance of what is past teach thee how bitter are the fruits of sin; fear, sorrow, shame, and confusion; and henceforth learn by experience (for nothing else can truly inform thee) how sweet are the fruits of righteousness; peace and hope, and joy, and holy confidence. So shall thy brethren receive thee, as one alive from the dead, and rejoice, because the sheep that went astray and was lost, is now found again. Nay, what is infinitely more, angels themselves will take up their golden harps, and join in celebrating that mercy which hath effected thy conversion. "There is joy in heaven "among the angels of God, over one sinner that "repenteth."

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DISCOURSE XI.

ON THE PURIFICATION.

LUKE, II. 22.

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.

AMONG the many advantages we enjoy in these seats of learning and religion, it may surely be deemed one, that an honourable respect is paid to those sacred festivals which the church of England, in her wisdom, has thought proper to retain. These are few, and they are important; so few, that the necessary prosecution of secular business is not too much broken in upon; so important, that nothing seems to have been appointed in vain. They compose a celestial circle, of which Christ is the centre: his first and faithful friends form the circumference, reflecting back on him the glory received from him. They visit us in their annual course with messages from above, each teaching us something to believe, and, in consequence, something to do. They bring repeatedly to our remembrance, truths which we are apt to forget: they secure to us little intervals of rest from worldly cares, that our hearts with our

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hands may be lifted up to God in the heavens: they revive our zeal and fervour in performing the offices of religion: they cheer the heart with sentiments of gratitude and thankfulness: they confirm us in habits of obedience to the institutions of the church and the injunctions of our superiors: they stir us up to an imitation of those who have gone before us in the way of holiness: they minister an occasion to our children, of inquiring into the meaning of their institution; and afford us an opportunity of explaining the several doctrines and duties of Christianity to which they refer: in short, to use the words of the excellent Hooker, "they are the splendour and outward dignity of our religion, forcible witnesses of ancient truth, provocations to the exercises of all piety, shadows of our endless felicity in heaven, on earth everlasting records and memorials; wherein they who cannot be drawn to hearken unto that we teach, may, only by looking upon that we do, in a manner read whatever we believe. Well to celebrate these religious and sacred days, is to spend the flower of our time happily*."

Let us, therefore, arrest the festival of the day, and detain it while we learn from it those useful lessons it is prepared to teach, concerning the purification of the blessed Virgin; the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple; the sacrifice offered upon the occasion; and the behaviour of Simeon and Anna.

If we look into the law of Moses, we find it ordained, that the woman who had born a male child;

* Ecclesiastical Polity, v. 71.

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for forty days thence ensuing (a period, for whatever reason, often fixed on in cases of humiliation), was to be accounted impure, to touch no hallowed thing, nor to approach the sanctuary. At the expiration of that term, she was to repair, for the first time, to the temple, and there to have an atonement made for her by the priest.

With respect to the whole class of those incidents and maladies to which the body is subject, thus regarded in the eye of the divine law as unclean; from the nature of the ordinance itself, as well as from numberless passages in the writings of the prophets, and more especially in the New Testament, it should seem evident, that something farther was intended than may at first sight appear. "The law stood," among other things, "in divers outward washings "and cleansings." But may it not be here asked, as in another instance, "Doth God take care for "these? Or saith he it not for our sake?" Hath he not enjoined such external rites, for the sake of conveying by them to future ages and generations, no less than to those then present, some truths of universal use and importance?

Of one thing we are all well assured. That alone which renders man and the creation otherwise than acceptable in the sight of their Maker, is sin. That alone which can reinstate them in his favour, is the redemption by Christ. By means of the former we are affirmed to have become "corrupted, polluted, "defiled, unclean;" by the instrumentality of the latter we are said to be "purged, purified, washed, "cleansed"—terms all borrowed from the legal cere-

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monies, at once explaining them, and being explained by them.

Could the shadow of a doubt remain upon this head, it must be dispersed by that full, direct, express declaration, which the apostle has made, in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; persons, who, if their education had been what it ought to have been, would have known these things, and not needed that any man should teach them.

"The first tabernacle was a figure for the time
"then present, in which were offered both gifts and
"sacrifices, that could not make him that did the
"service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;
"which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers
"washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them
"till the time of reformation. But Christ being come,
"an high priest of good things to come, by a greater
"and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,
"that is to say, not of this building; neither by the
"blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood,
"he entered in once into the holy place, having ob-
"tained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood
"of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer
"sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying
"of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of
"Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered
"himself without spot to God, purge your conscience
"from dead works to serve the living God? Almost
"all things are by the law purged with blood, and
"without shedding of blood there is no remission.
"It was, therefore, necessary that the patterns of
"things in the heavens should be purified with these;

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"but the heavenly things themselves with better sa-
"crifices than these. For Christ is not entered into
"the holy places made with hands, which are the
"figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to
"appear in the presence of God for us."

It seems impossible, that, by any paraphrase or commentary, these words can be rendered plainer than they are in themselves.

To apply, therefore, this general reasoning of the apostle to the ceremony of the day, the purification of women after childbirth under the law; if it be asked, what such ceremony was intended to import? can a better answer be given to the question, than that which is given by the standard writer on the festivals of our church?

"It imports, that, since Adam's fall, we are con-
"ceived in sin; that our birth is impure; that we
"derive from our parents an hereditary stain, where-
"by we are naturally unclean, and children of wrath;
"and to show the contagion thereof, not only the
"child was circumcised, but the mother also was
"cleansed by a sacrifice for sin."

But here the difficulty may be thought rather increased than diminished; since nothing of this kind could hold good respecting the blessed Virgin, and "that holy thing which was born of her," and justly called "The Son of God." The morning of his birth was indeed "a morning without clouds." No spot then sullied the face of heaven. Why, therefore, must such a mother, and such a Son, pay obedience to the law? The Son paid obedience, as when he submitted to be circumcised, and to be baptized;

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not that he had any sin to be put off or washed away, but because, being "made of a woman, and made "under the law," it became him to obey the law, or, as he expressed it to John, who proposed the question at his baptism, "to fulfil all righteousness." In himself he was not a sinner; but in our stead, he was content to appear as such. The holy Virgin placed herself, upon this occasion, on a level with other women, when she was so much above them, to exhibit a pattern of humility and obedience, of gratitude and devotion, or regard and reverence for the ordinances of God, which no one is privileged to neglect or slight, but which all should attend, however they may fancy themselves not to need, or not to be benefited by them. Indeed, who can have the confidence and presumption to absent themselves from the temple, when they behold Mary there, whom all generations have agreed to call Blessed! Let mothers, when, in the day of thanksgiving, they approach the altar, set before them her bright example; and let us remember, that by her becoming a mother, we are become the heirs of everlasting salvation; joint heirs with him who was, as at this time, presented in the temple.

"When the days of her purification were accom-"plished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present "him to the Lord; as it is written in the law of the "Lord, Every male that openeth the womb, shall "be called holy to the Lord."

Great were the privileges from the beginning annexed to the first-born. Theirs was the pre-eminence in power and wealth; and before the designa-

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tion of the sons of Levi to the service of the altar among the people of God, theirs was the priesthood also. After that event, they still continued, as before, heirs of a double honour and inheritance; they were still offered in form to God, though redeemed, at a certain price, from actual attendance in the sanctuary. Agreeably to this injunction, Jesus was brought by his mother at the proper time, and presented in the temple, as her first-born. He filled up the character, and highly exalted it. Besides being her first-born son, he was likewise πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, the first-begotten, or first-born, of the whole creation; not only because he εστι, *is*, πρω παντων, *before all things*, and all things, both in heaven and earth, were created by him, but also because he was begotten to inherit all things, and in all things to have the pre-eminence, since all things were created εις αυτον, *for* him, as well as δι' αυτου, *by* him[b]; in which view he is styled absolutely τον πρωτοτοκον, THE First-born[c], uniting in himself all that was from the beginning prefigured by the rights and honours of primogeniture. He is styled, moreover, πρωτοτοκος εκ των νεκρων, the *First-born*, or *First-begotten, from the dead*, in regard of his being the first that rose from the dead, no more to die. And with allusion to the peculiar appropriation of all the first-born to God, the assembly of redeemed spirits is called, "the church of "the first-born, written," or enrolled, "in heaven."

"The blessed Virgin," says Bishop Taylor, "had received a greater favour than ever was re-

[b] Coloss. i. 15. &c. [c] Heb. i. 6.

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"ceived by the daughters of Adam; and, knowing "from whence, and for whose glory, she had receiv-"ed it, she returns the holy Jesus as a gift to God "again; for she had nothing—the world had no-"thing—so precious as himself, of which she made "an oblation. Never was there before an act of "adoration proportionable to the honour and majes-"ty of the great God. But now there was; and it "was made, at the presentation of the child Jesus in "the temple."

Let *us* not fail, by using them aright, to return to God all things we have received from him; and by a virtuous education dedicate our children to him who gave them, bringing them early to the temple, and presenting them to the Lord.

Bear we likewise in mind, that he who was thus offered in the temple, afterwards offered, and still continues to present himself, to appear in the presence of God for us. He it is, whose precious blood, whose infinite merits, whose prevailing satisfaction, the church in her prayers presenteth daily to God; and through whom alone ourselves and all our oblations are accepted in the heavenly places. Nay, at that hallowed hour when the eucharist is consecrated, Christ is, again, figuratively and sacramentally, presented in the temple on earth. For his sake, the Father is then well pleased with us: he hears our prayers, forgives our sins, heals our infirmities, and graciously accepts our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Think not, O man, who slightest and disparagest that holy ordinance, that thou shouldst have received any pleasure, hadst thou

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stood by the blessed Virgin, when she presented her son at Jerusalem.

Jesus, not sprung from the tribe of Levi, but from that of Judah, was redeemed, at the same price with others, from attending on the Mosaic ritual. He came to put a period to that dispensation; to establish the religion of the Gospel; to be invested with an everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchisedek; to be, himself, the priest and the sacrifice, the temple and the altar.

The Christian, once presented to God in baptism, cannot obtain redemption from that service. He ought not ever to desire it. Such service is the only perfect freedom; a freedom from the tyranny of turbulent passions and imperious desires, from the bondage of sin, of death, and of hell. Happy the servants of the best of masters, did they not grow weary of being well, and change, only to repent of their folly in having done so!

The offering made by Mary was the offering of the poor, of those who were not of ability to bring a more costly sacrifice; according to that which is said in the law of the Lord; "If she be not able to "bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or "two young pigeons[d]."

Our Lord thought proper to appear, while on earth, in the character of a poor man, that he might advance the poor to the riches of his kingdom, and in the mean time render their condition here supportable, at least, if not pleasant, when they reflect-

[d] Lev. xii. 8.

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ed that their Saviour was once as poor as they. At his birth he was poor, destitute of common conveniences. In his life poor; "foxes had holes, and "the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man "had not where to lay his head." At his death poor; sold by the traitor for a paltry sum, stripped, crucified, and then buried at the expense of others. Let not him, therefore, who is of low degree, be troubled and cast down; but let him rather rejoice, because in his poor estate God hath had respect unto him. Let him take comfort in that he is made like unto his Saviour, and endeavour daily to become more and more like him, by bearing his lot with patience, contentment, and resignation.

The sacrifices offered in old time for atonement and redemption, tended to point out to the world this great and concerning truth, that offenders should be saved from death, and that God would one day accept a person in their stead, who should suffer what they deserved, and bestow upon them what they did not deserve. As the person thus destined to take away the sins of men was to be an innocent person, the most innocent creatures were generally chosen to represent him; among beasts the lamb, among birds the dove—a bird not armed with beak or talons, and having no design or desire to injure its fellows; noted for purity and fidelity, for meekness and mourning; sociable and friendly, and delighting to be about the dwellings of men. Such, after the example of our Master, ought we in temper and disposition to be, and then to offer up "ourselves, our souls and bo-

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"dies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, through "him, to God, which is our reasonable service."

Among those in Jerusalem who expected the appearance of a Redeemer about the time when he did appear, was a man named Simeon. Stricken in years, and feeble in body, he possessed a mind and a faith vigorous and active. Not like the Pharisees of that day, studious only to be thought "a just and de-"vout man," he really was such, full of religion and the love of God, of an exact justice and sincere charity towards his neighbour; looking forward, while he lived upon earth, to the life of heaven, and desiring nothing more than that, before he died, he might see Him whom the Jews and all the world did look for, the promised Messiah, the consolation of afflicted Israel. A devout Jew, who understood the Scriptures of the Old Testament, waited for the first advent of Messiah in the weakness of mortal flesh: the devout Christian now waits for his second advent in the majesty of immortal glory.

Such being the character of Simeon, it had pleased God to reward his extraordinary faith and piety with a gracious promise that the wish of his heart should be granted, "that he should not die, till he had seen "the Lord's Christ." So good is it to live in the fear of God, in the expectation of his Son, and under the guidance of his Spirit.

The hour was now come that Jesus should be brought to the temple, whither Simeon resorted, not out of curiosity, interest, or hypocrisy, motives which too often lead men thither, but by the immediate

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direction of superior influence; "he came by the Spi-
"rit into the temple. And when the parents brought
"in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom
"of the law," and the priest, as was usual, embraced the presented child, and blessed him; then the good old man, transported and overcome at the so much desired sight, could no longer contain himself; but taking the holy infant in his arms, he poured forth with that voice which was soon to be heard no more, the most melodious strains of gratitude and praise, bidding farewell to the world in the words of that hymn which we are taught by our church to recite on the evening of each day, and which to the good man, at the close of life, will be sweet indeed—
"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
"according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen
"thy salvation, which thou hast prepared be-
"fore the face of all people: a light to lighten the
"Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."
God had performed his promise, had shown him the Messiah, had filled his heart with joy, and made his old age honourable. Simeon had now gazed upon the sun, and thenceforth became blind to the beauties of this lower world. Earth had no charms for him. He desired to depart. Thus will it be with the just and devout Christian, whose heart is set upon the Lord's Christ, and the consolation of Israel; who is led by the Spirit into the temple, there to find, to behold, and to embrace him, by faith, in his holy ordinances. If any dispute the truth of what is said, and be disposed to ask Nathanael's question, "Can

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"any good thing come out of Galilee?"—the answer must be made in the words of Philip—COME, AND SEE.

Joseph and Mary, whose understandings, we may suppose, were gradually opened to the wonders about to be unfolded and accomplished, "marvelled at "those things which were spoken" by Simeon, who "blessed them, and," in the ardour of the prophetical spirit, "said unto Mary, Behold this child is set "for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and "for a sign which shall be spoken against, that the "thoughts of many hearts may be revealed; yea, "a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also." I recite these words last, that the sense may appear clearer; as, in the place where they stand, they are evidently parenthetic.

This is a short description of what passed at the time, and has been passing in the world ever since. It is not, as many seem to imagine, a matter of indifference, when Christ is preached, whether he be received or rejected. It is necessarily productive of great effects; the fall of some, to whom he becomes a stone of stumbling and offence; the rising of others, who find in him a fortress and rock of salvation. Every one, therefore, should most diligently, from time to time, examine the state of his own mind, respecting the doctrines and the precepts of our Lord, whether he gives them a kind and hearty reception, or secretly slights, and contemns, and is ashamed of them. For the Gospel is a touchstone, by which the grand trial is made of the spirits of

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men; the thoughts of whose hearts are soon revealed by their words and actions; since, where it comes, they cannot long refrain from discovering their sentiments and inclinations, one way or other. Deep were to be the sorrows occasioned in the heart of her who bare the holy child, by the opposition raised against him, and the sufferings sustained by him. "A sword shall pierce through thine own "soul also." The piercings of this sword must now be felt by those who love him, when he is again become "a sign" by so many "spoken against." But as it was with the sufferings of his person, so will it be with those of his name—"Weeping may endure "for a night; but joy cometh in the morning."

While this curious and interesting scene was exhibited in the temple, "one Anna, a prophetess, a "widow of about fourscore and four years, who "served God with fastings and prayers night and "day, coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them "that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

On her story we may observe, that a life regularly and uniformly conducted according to the discipline of religion and the ordinances of the church, attracts the notice of Heaven, and is thought worthy of being recorded by the Spirit of truth: that the returns of prayer and the blessings of piety, though not bestowed, perhaps, at the seasons when we fondly expect them, yet at the last they will come, and crown all our wishes with a sight of the Redeemer, and a participation of his joy: that we are

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always most likely to receive spiritual comforts in the temple. There it was, that this devout person had for so many years poured forth her heart unto God; and there it was, that it pleased him to reward her, by causing her to come in, at the instant when Jesus was to be seen there. In holy places the Holy One doth chiefly manifest himself: he goeth in the sanctuary, and blessing goeth with him. The man who absents himself from the house of God, may miss the very sermon that would have brought him to consideration, to repentance, to faith, to pardon, and to peace; he may miss an opportunity of finding his Saviour, which may not be offered to him again.

To conclude—We are taught, by this example of Anna, what returns we should make to Heaven for the knowledge of salvation communicated to us. We should glorify God, and edify our neighbour. For she first "gave thanks unto the Lord;" and then "spake of Christ to all them that looked "for redemption in Jerusalem." Some such there are at all times; and they should converse together, to improve and to comfort one another; hoping, at the end of their days, to behold the Lord's Christ, the consolation of Israel, the light and the glory of the church universal, in the true temple, in the heavenly Jerusalem: where, let us beseech God, that "as his blessed Son was pre-"sented in the earthly temple, in the substance of "our flesh, so we may all be presented unto him, "with pure and clean hearts, by the same Jesus

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"Christ, our Lord;" to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and honour, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

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DISCOURSE XII.

THE NECESSITY OF BELIEVING.

MARK, XVI. 15, 16.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

IT has been matter of wonder and offence to many, that in the great concern of man's salvation so much stress should be laid upon *faith*. "He that believ-"eth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall "be condemned." Innumerable are the passages in different parts of the Scriptures, which evidently speak the same thing. They are well known, and need not be now cited. The point is one of great importance, and I shall endeavour to clear it to your apprehensions by,

I. Removing out of the way those objections which have been made, and perhaps have already arisen in your own minds; and then,

II. Stating the grounds and reasons on which this divine determination is founded.

I. Of the objections, some respect the persons

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who are to believe, and others the doctrines to be believed.

Thousands and ten thousands, it may be said, never heard of Christ or his Gospel. It is true; and to them most certainly the determination does not extend. It can extend to such alone as have the Gospel preached to them. "Go ye, and preach the "Gospel; he that believeth"—that is, believeth the Gospel so preached to him—"shall be saved," &c.

But what, then, shall be the lot of all those who lived and died strangers to Christianity? They are in the hands of a gracious God, who may bestow on them the mercies of a redemption of which they never heard. Without the death of Christ no flesh could have been saved. But who can say, to how many, and in what different ways, the merits of that death may be applied? For his sake the sins may be pardoned of all those who in honesty and uprightness did their best, according to the knowledge vouchsafed them during the dispensation under which they lived. He who holds up his hand at the bar of eternal judgement, will not be there tried by a law which he never knew. The apostle to the Romans is express, that the Jews, who have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; and the Gentiles, who were without *that* law, shall be judged by the rule they had derived in part by tradition from their ancestors, and improved and enlarged by their own reasonings and disquisitions. But then, as the same apostle argues at large, every man, whether Jew or Gentile, who is tried by a law of *works*, will, in strictness of speaking, be cast; because it will be

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proved upon him, that he has broken it. All the world are become guilty before God, and must place their hope in the mercies of that redemption which is by Christ Jesus.

The same limitation must of course take place in the case of infants, idiots, persons insane, and any way so defective in understanding, as to be incapable of learning and believing aright. He who made us, knoweth whereof we are made; he knoweth what is in man—in every man; and will not exact the tale of bricks, where he hath not thought proper to furnish straw.

We may conclude in like manner concerning what is called *invincible ignorance*, or ignorance so circumstanced as to admit of no remedy. "How can "they hear without a preacher?" Where nothing is taught, nothing can be learned.

But let a man be very cautious how he attempts to shelter himself under this plea. At the great day it will be inquired very minutely, not only what we *did* know, but also what we *might* have known, had we so pleased; had we been in earnest, and taken due pains. In the whole compass of speculation, there is not a more awful and alarming thought than this. The sinner may say, I did not know; but it will be returned—Why did you not? Had you no opportunities, which you neglected; no books, no persons to whom you might apply? Did you ask, did you search, as you would have done, if likely to lose your health or your estate? Or did you account it a matter not worthy your inquiry, and so, in a careless manner, dismiss it to take its chance? How have you

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been employed? How have you passed your time? A very small proportion of the hours spent in one single amusement would have brought you acquainted with all that it behoved you to know and believe for your soul's health. I mention this to show, that however it may fare with Heathens, and others in a state really destitute of information, and where it was impossible to be obtained, *we* shall in vain attempt to excuse our unbelief or ill practices by our ignorance. Nothing at the day of trial will more shock and confound us, than when the times and the places shall be pointed out in which we were called to know and to do better, but refused to obey the call. Let none, therefore, deceive themselves in this very weighty particular.

Respecting the doctrines to be believed, it is objected, that they are *mysterious;* they relate to persons and things in another world, which are therefore *hidden* from us: we can neither see them nor hear them: none of the senses with which we are at present endowed, can reach or perceive them. What then is to be done? Why, certainly, we must believe the account which God, by his prophets and apostles, has been pleased to give us, and we must form our notions of them, as well as we can, by comparison with those things which are the objects of our senses. Our state, with regard to God and the glories of his heavenly kingdom, is exactly like the state of a blind man with regard to the sun and the light thereof. He cannot see the sun, or the light that issues from it; yet he would be unreasonable, should he refuse to believe what his friends, who do see it, tell him

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concerning it; though, after all, they can give him but a very poor, imperfect idea of it. If it pleased God to open his eyes, and bestow on him the blessing of sight, he would know more of the matter in one single moment, than description, study, and meditation could have taught him in a hundred years, or a thousand years, or ten thousand years. Such is our case. We cannot see God; we cannot see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; we cannot see how they are three, and how they are one. But shall we therefore, in opposition to the authority and word of God himself, deny that they are so? We may reason and dispute upon the subject for ages; but in that instant when we are admitted to his presence, and "see him as he is," every doubt and difficulty will vanish at once; and we shall know—how little we *did* know, or possibly *could* know, before. Tell a blind man, your sight can travel over the space of one hundred millions of miles, as soon as it can move the distance of ten yards—how full of absurdity, contradiction, and impossibility, must this assertion appear to him, who can conceive a motion only in slow succession! Yet it is a certain truth: for let a person be led forth, in a clear night, with his eyes closed, on opening them he will see the remotest star in the firmament that can be seen at all, as soon as he will see a candle at the distance only of a few yards from him.

This instance may serve to show, how very ill qualified we are to dispute with our Maker concerning his own nature and existence, and the things of another and invisible world. Of the truth of reve-

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lation we have the most decisive evidence, that of the senses, in the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, of which the eyes and ears of men were sufficient judges. Knowing therefore assuredly that God hath spoken, and giving diligent attention to that which he hath spoken, it is our part at present to believe what we shall one day be permitted to see.

Another objection to the doctrines of which we are treating is, that learned men have been engaged in controversies about them for many hundred years, and are not yet agreed: what, therefore, must the unlearned do?

To this it may be answered, in the first place, that learned men have carried on controversies about every thing. Some have thought there is no revelation at all; some that there is no providence, some that there is no God; and while some have denied that there is any world but this in which we live, others have maintained that this world itself is a dream and a fancy, existing only in our own minds, and that in reality there is no such thing. So that if we wait till all learned men shall agree, we shall believe nothing, know nothing, and do nothing.

2. All the disputes concerning the Trinity have been owing to one single circumstance, namely, the vain, idle, and presumptuous curiosity of man, who instead of believing that which God hath revealed, will ever be prying into that which God hath not revealed. That there is in the Deity a distinction and an union; that God is three in some respect, and one in some other respect; this is what we are required to believe: and who can prove that it is not

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so? or why should any man dispute it? But we are not content, unless we know precisely the manner *how* the three Persons are one God; how the Son is generated, and the Holy Ghost proceeds. Hence all our misfortunes: hence the subject has been overwhelmed and confounded by an inundation of scholastic and metaphysical controversy, which it requires no small degree of penetration and sagacity, as well as of learning, to understand; if indeed some of it can be understood at all. If you ask, what the unlearned are to do, with regard to this dispute,—I answer, they are happy in their ignorance, in which I would wish them ever to continue. Two learned physicians may differ in opinion, as to the *manner* in which the human body is nourished by its food; they may perplex each other with hard words; they may argue themselves out of temper, and lose their appetite; while an unlearned, plain, honest countryman eats his meal in quietness, gives God thanks for it, goes forth in the strength of it to his labour, and in the evening receives his reward.

In the concerns of this world, as well as of another, the most interesting truths are always the plainest; they are matters of fact, on which we may depend, without being solicitous to know exactly how they are brought about. Who can tell by what means a small seed, buried in the earth, and there becoming, to all appearance, dead and putrid, shoots forth into a blade, and an ear, producing thirty, forty, or sixty seeds of its own kind? A man, calling himself a philosopher, might defy the husbandman to show how this could possibly be. The husbandman's

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common sense would direct him to answer, that it was not his concern to show *how* it could be; that he knew it certainly would be, and therefore should continue to sow: which should he, upon the strength of the philosopher's arguments, neglect to do, the world must be starved.

Objections thus removed, let us now,

II. Consider the grounds and reasons on which is founded the divine determination in the text, namely, that when the Gospel is preached, it is necessary, in order to a man's salvation, that he should believe it.

And this point will require but little to be said upon it. For to what purpose is the Gospel preached, unless that it should be believed? When God, with so stupendous a preparation of prophecies and miracles, has published his word, can it be a matter of indifference whether we believe it or not? Can any man in his senses possibly think it such? Surely not: the Lord of heaven and earth is not with impunity to be insulted and trifled with in this manner. "He that believeth not the record which God hath "given of his Son," as the beloved disciple has justly observed, "makes God a liar." If man give the lie to man, it is judged an offence to be expiated only by the blood of the offender. Can man then give the lie to his Maker, and be blameless?

The divine word is not an insignificant word; it is set, like its Author, for the falling or rising of many. It is not without its effect in every one to whom it is preached. If we will not suffer it to avail to our salvation, it will avail to our condemnation. "The

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"word that I speak," says our Lord, "that shall "judge him, at the last day."

What is it that distinguishes a Christian from a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen? It is his faith, his knowledge of Christ and the Gospel, his belief in all that has been revealed. When he no longer retains that belief, he ceases to be a Christian; he ceases to have any share or interest in Christ; he becomes an apostate from his religion.

A strange doctrine has of late years been diffused among us, that *sincerity* is every thing; that if a man be but *sincere*, it matters not what he believes, or what he does. If this principle be carried to its full extent, it must take away all distinction between truth and falsehood, right and wrong; it sets upon a level those who crucified Christ, and those who accepted him as their Lord and Master; those who persecuted the Christians, and the Christians who were persecuted. Many who assisted at the crucifixion of Christ, might really imagine that he was a deceiver, and that they did right in so punishing him. But *was* he therefore a deceiver, or *did* they do right? St. Paul tells us, that in his unconverted state, he "*verily thought* he ought to do many things contrary "to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" and, accordingly, he "was exceedingly mad against the disci-"ples," and would have extirpated that name from the earth, had it been in his power. But was he justified in endeavouring to do this, because he had taken up a false persuasion? Undoubtedly not. He confesses himself to have been, on this account, the greatest of sinners, and that he obtained mercy only

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through the unreserved grace and goodness of God. The case is this—Before a man can lay any claim to *sincerity*, in the full and proper sense of the word, he must be able to show, when God, to whom all things are known and all hearts are open, shall call upon him, that he has not, through indolence, neglected to search after the truth, nor through passion, prejudice, or interest, refused to receive it. This will go to the bottom of the dispute, and lay open the deception.

It will enable us likewise to answer another plea sometimes urged in favour of infidelity, namely, that there can be no merit or demerit in believing or disbelieving; that a man cannot believe as he pleases, but only as the evidence appears to him.

How argues the apostle upon this topic?—"What "if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make "the word of God of none effect? God forbid! Let "God be true"—God will be true—though—"every "man be a liar." If God have given, as he certainly has given, good and sufficient evidence, it is at any man's peril that he rejects it; and he rejects it not for insufficiency in the evidence, but from some hidden corruption in his heart, which ought to have been first cast out, before he sat down to judge.

In the presence of a multitude of spectators, Christ raised Lazarus from the dead. On seeing the miracle, many believed on him, and became his disciples. Why did not all do so, for all saw the miracle? There could be no deception: none was thought of or suspected: all allowed that a person dead was, by a word spoken, recalled to life. Yet

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there were those, who, instead of joining themselves to Christ, and acknowledging their Messiah, consulted that they might put Lazarus to death. It does not always happen, that we can know what passes in the minds of men on such occasions. But, in the present instance, we are admitted behind the scenes, and full information is communicated. "Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and "said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and "take away both our place and nation." Want of evidence is not the complaint. "This man doth "many miracles;" the point is conceded; but politics interfered; they apprehended they should suffer, if they confessed Christ, from the Roman government, to which they were then subject. They therefore stifled their convictions, forced their consciences, and from that day forth, to make all sure, took "counsel to put Jesus to death." They carried their counsel into execution; and the consequence was, that what before they vainly feared, now actually happened—"the Romans did come, and did "take away both their place and nation." This may serve to convince you, how large a share the *will* has in the production of faith; and that no evidence in the world will cause a man to believe that which, for private reasons, he does not *choose* to believe.

I shall conclude with mentioning the chief ground on which the necessity of faith is so much pressed in Scripture, namely, because it comprehends in it the great motives of action; it is the principle of life.

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"The just shall live by faith," says the apostle, at the conclusion of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and if, at your leisure, you will peruse the eleventh chapter, you will there find a history of the great and wonderful works wrought by holy men in old time, from Abel downwards, through the power of this principle. In us, to whom more has been revealed than was revealed to them, it should not be less operative and effectual than it was in them. We shall constantly perceive the vigour of our practice to be proportionable to the steadfastness and liveliness of our faith; what revives one, will always quicken the other. From every doctrine in the creed issues a commandment; and the doctrine stirs us up to keep the commandment.

When, by reciting the creed, we declare our belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with all that each has done for us; we should love the Father, for his tender love; adore the Almighty, for his infinite power; and commit our souls to him, in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.

From Jesus we should seek salvation; from Christ, the anointed, as a prophet, instruction; as a priest, atonement; as a king, protection; as the only begotten Son, the adoption of children. As our Lord, we should serve him, for his conception, in faith; for his nativity, in humility; for his sufferings, in patience; for his cross, in crucifying sin; for his death, in mortifying the flesh; for his burial, in burying the old man with his evil desires; for his descent, in meditation on the other world; for his resurrection, in newness of life; for his ascension and enthroniza-

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tion, in setting our affections on things above, on the pleasures at God's right hand; for his return, in awe of his second coming; for his judgement, in judging ourselves, before we come to be judged by him.

From the Spirit we should seek the breath of saving grace; that so, in the church we may partake of a high and heavenly calling; in the holy church, of sanctification; in the catholic church, of communion with our brethren in prayers and sacraments; and all this to a firm persuasion of the remission of our sins, as well as a confident hope of resurrection and translation to life eternal. Thus is the creed at once a profession of faith, a manual of devotions and a directory of practice—"The just shall live by his "faith."

That we may evermore preserve this faith pure and undefiled, and that "by works faith may be made "perfect," God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ.

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DISCOURSE XIII.

JOSHUA'S CHOICE.

JOSHUA, XXIV. 15.

Choose you this day whom ye will serve—but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

A NOBLE resolution! formed by a very eminent person, on a very solemn occasion. That person was Joshua, the leader of the hosts of Israel, by whose arm it pleased God to execute upon sinful nations the punishment due to their crimes, and to place his chosen people in the land promised to their fathers. The general was now "old and stricken "in age," and the hour of death drew near. Before it came, he wished to deliver his final sentiments to the people under his command. They were assembled for that purpose; "he called for all Israel, for "their elders, and for their heads, and for their "judges, and for their officers; and they presented "themselves before God," as you do this day. They were not backward, we may be sure, in coming. Last words are always listened to with attention, as likely to be words of truth, and words of importance. Dying men do not usually utter falsehoods, or speak

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of trifles. But the last words of a veteran officer under whom they had fought and conquered, of a wise and heaven-directed ruler, by whom they had been settled, according to their tribes, in pleasant and peaceable habitations, must, above all others, deserve to be heard and remembered for ever. He reminded them of all the mercies which God from time to time had shown to the nation, of the wonders that had been wrought, and the very minute and punctual manner in which the divine promises had been fulfilled. He urged from hence the return which they ought to make, and the bitter consequences which they might expect to follow their ingratitude and apostasy; since God would not be less exact in the infliction of his threats, than he had been in the performance of his promises. The means by which these likewise would be accomplished, were pointed out. Notwithstanding their establishment in Canaan, enemies of that establishment still subsisted, and were left for this very end, in case of their rebellion, "to be scourges in their sides, and thorns in "their eyes, till they perished from off the good land "which the Lord their God had given them." He then draws all his instructions and admonitions to a point, and thus leaves his testimony recorded against them, on the behalf of himself and his family—"If it seem "evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day "whom ye will serve—but as for me and my house, "we will serve the Lord."

Such are the particulars of the case alluded to in the words of the text. The general instruction they contain may be drawn forth, for our own use, by

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considering, *why* we are to serve; *whom* we are to serve; and *how* we are to serve.

If we attend to the writings of some, and the manners of more, in the present age, we shall be led to think, that we are not to serve either God or man; that we have nothing to do with church or state; that the world is a forest, into which we are turned loose, like so many wild asses' colts, to snuff up the wind, and run till we drop; in a word, that we are *born free and independent*. Alas, poor creatures! *free and independent*, indeed! Why, we should not live six hours to an end, after our birth, in such a state. From the first moment in which we see light, we depend, for preservation and support, on the good offices of those around us, they depend on others, and all on God. One planteth, and another watereth; but who else can give the increase? Who is it else that can direct the operations of the powers of nature, concerned in bringing food out of the earth; that can open the bottles of heaven to pour down a kindly rain; or can stay them when they threaten to overwhelm and destroy all the hopes of a promised harvest? Let others talk of matter and motion, of chance or necessity; "we praise thee, "O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord."

To behold the fair frame of the world, with the several parts so constructed as they are for use and beauty, and all the various movements carried on in it, and to suppose it had no Maker, must surely argue a great defect of understanding. "The fool hath "said in his heart, there is no God;" and he is represented as having said it only *in his heart*, not

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daring to utter with his mouth so preposterous a sentiment. Lives there a man, who can look at a house, or even a plough, and imagine, for a moment, that it made itself? How much less, then, the heavens and the earth, and the works that are therein? Away with the idle fancy, the sick man's dream; it would be criminal to waste any more time in the consideration of it!

But shall we then suppose, that he who created the world has withdrawn himself from the care of it; that he regards not the creatures which he has made, nor desires to be regarded by them? The supposition is unnatural and absurd. It was made by one sect of the Heathen only, in their lowest and darkest state, and that sect long abhorred by the rest for its folly and impiety. When riches flowed in from the East, and luxury had corrupted the minds and unstrung the nerves of the old Romans, these tenets became fashionable; a circumstance which was thought, by wise men, to prognosticate and to hasten the downfall of the empire. It is matter of melancholy reflection to observe, that the very same tenets have been of late revived and recommended in Great Britain, under the name and notion of *philosophy*, and are, if fame says true, daily gaining ground among the wealthy and the great, from whom they will soon descend to the middle and lower ranks, till the religious principle shall perish among us. May Heaven avert the omen, and save the land! The offence of Englishmen far exceeds that of the Romans, and is very greatly aggravated by this consideration: they who were atheists formerly, were

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atheists in opposition to a false religion; they who are atheists now, are such in opposition to the true. The Son of God is come, and has led us into all truth. The Scriptures have dispelled (and it ought to have been *for ever*) such gloomy and comfortless principles. They give us full assurance, that the providence of God extendeth itself over all things and all persons; that though his throne be indeed far removed from us, though it be exalted as the sun, yet that, like the sun, "Jehovah looketh from "heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men; from "the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the "inhabitants of the earth;" that he doth what the sun cannot do—"He fashioneth their hearts alike, "and considereth all their works;" that "the eyes of "all wait on him, and he giveth them their food in "due season."

Man being thus dependent, it is but reasonable that he should acknowledge such dependence, and that he should *serve*. We are to inquire,

Secondly, *Whom* he should serve? For, as the apostle has remarked, "there are gods many, and "lords many," who in different ages have claimed and obtained the homage of mankind. The point in dispute between Joshua and his people was not, whether they should serve *at all*, but *whom* they should serve, whether the gods of the nations around them, or Jehovah, the God of Israel.

It may seem difficult to account for, and even to conceive, that strange propensity which appears in the early ages of the world to the worship of idols, and of which nothing less than a seventy years' cap-

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tivity in Babylon could finally cure the Israelites themselves. Before that event, notwithstanding all the miracles of power and goodness which God had wrought for them, we read continually of their forsaking *him*, and going over to the worship of *strange gods*. Who these *strange gods* were, or what charms they possessed, thus to bewitch and seduce the minds of persons better taught and instructed, deserves consideration.

Now it appears, by the testimony of all history, sacred and profane, that the oldest and first idolaters worshipped the creature instead of the Creator, the powers of nature instead of the God of nature. Receiving life, health, food, and many other blessings by means of the sun, the light, and the air, they forgot God who made those elements, and deemed *them* to be the gods that governed the world, supposing them to be endued with understanding and wisdom, as well as power and might.

This kind of idolatry perished long ago, with the nations among whom it was practised. But let us not imagine we ourselves are therefore free from the crime; since every man is guilty of it, who offers to the *world* or any thing *in* the world, the service which is due to God only.

The Scripture declares concerning covetousness, that it is *idolatry;* and concerning unbelievers and bad men in general, that they serve the *god* of this world. He, therefore, who devotes his time and his pains, his words and his actions, his heart and his affections, to the pursuit of power, wealth, or pleasure, in effect revives the old idolatry, and virtually

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sacrifices to the gods of the nations. He serves the creature, rather than the Creator. And of the service which he is often led to perform, it cannot be said, as it is truly said of another and better service, that it is "perfect freedom." They who, in veneration of Baal, cut themselves with knives and lancets, or, out of respect to Moloch, made their children to pass through the fire, would not suffer, perhaps, by the comparison. Health and peace, honour and conscience, present happiness and future expectancies, are costly oblations, daily and hourly offered at the shrine of these sublunary deities.

The *world*, in short, under one form or other, has ever been the idol set up against God by the adversary of mankind, like the image erected by the monarch of Babylon in the plain of Dura, before which "the "princes, the governors, and the captains, the "judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, "and all the rulers of the provinces, were to fall "down, and worship." The world, with its fashions and its follies, its principles and its practices, has been proposed in form to Englishmen, as the proper object of their attention and devotion. A late celebrated nobleman has avowed as much with respect to himself, and by his writings said in effect to it, "Save me, for thou art my God!" He has tendered his assistance to act as priest upon the occasion, and conduct the ceremonial. At the close of life, however, his God, he found, was about to forsake him; and therefore was forsaken by him—You shall hear some of his last sentiments and expressions, which have not been hitherto (so far as I know) duly no-

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ticed, and applied to their proper use, that of furnishing an antidote (and they do furnish a very powerful one) to the noxious positions contained in his volumes. They are well worthy your strictest attention. "I have run," says this man of the world, "the silly rounds of business and pleasure, and have "done with them all.—I have enjoyed all the plea- "sures of the world, and consequently know their "fatility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise "them at their real value, which is in truth very "low; whereas those that have not experienced, "always overrate them. They only see their gay out- "side, and are dazzled with their glare. But I have "been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse "pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move "the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt "the tallow candles, which illuminate the whole de- "coration, to the astonishment and admiration of an "ignorant audience.—When I reflect back upon "what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I "have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all "that frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of "the world had any reality; but I look upon all that "has passed as one of those romantic dreams which "opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means "desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of "the fugitive dream. Shall I tell you that I bear "this melancholy situation with that meritorious "constancy and resignation which most people boast "of? No; for I really cannot help it. I bear it— "because I must bear it, whether I will or no—I "think of nothing but killing time the best I can,

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"now that he is become mine enemy.—It is my re-
"solution to sleep in the carriage during the re-
"mainder of the journey."

When a Christian priest speaks slightingly of the world, he is supposed to do it in the way of his profession, and to decry, through envy, the pleasures he is forbidden to taste. But here, I think, you have the testimony of a witness every way competent. No man ever knew the world better, or enjoyed more of its favours, than this nobleman. Yet you see in how poor, abject, and wretched a condition, at the time when he most wanted help and comfort, the world left him, and he left the world. The sentences above-cited from him compose, in my humble opinion, the most striking and affecting sermon upon the subject, ever yet preached to mankind. My younger friends, lay them up in your minds, and write them on the tables of your hearts; take them into life with you: they will prove an excellent preservative against temptation. When you have duly considered them, and the character of him by whom they were uttered, you shall compare them, if you please, with the words of another person, who took his leave of the world in a very different manner—"I am now ready
"to be offered, and the time of my departure is at
"hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished
"my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there
"is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which
"the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that
"day." Say, shall your lot be with the Christian, or the man of the world; with the apostle, or the libertine? You will not hesitate a moment, but, in

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reply to those who may attempt to seduce you into the paths of vice and error, honestly and boldly exclaim, every one of you, with Joshua, "Choose "you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me "and my house, we will serve the Lord."

III. *How* we are to serve him, is the last point to be settled.

A concise way of coming at this, will be, to reflect upon the qualifications you require in a good servant, and to see that they be found in yourselves, considered as the servants of God.

These qualifications may all be reduced to two, that he be careful to know the will of his master, and diligent to do it. Both are most happily expressed and exemplified in the question asked by St. Paul, immediately upon his conversion—"Lord, what "wouldest thou have me to do?"—Never was there more interesting matter contained in so few plain and simple words. They were the first effect of the divine grace inspired into his heart. All the virtues and excellencies of his after life were comprehended in the disposition implied by them, as a plant is in its seed. They included the acorn, from whence arose that oak, which overshadowed and refreshed the world.

Upon a general view of them, they evidently intimate to us, a renunciation of all our former proceedings, during the time when we followed the motions of our own wills; a firm resolution of obeying the will of God for the residue of our days; and a hearty desire of attaining to the knowledge of it, for that purpose, and for that purpose only.

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But it is worth while to be a little more particular.

In our inquiries after the will of God, we are often apt to be partial. We inquire only after such parts of it as may happen to coincide with our circumstances, our situation, our tempers, our constitutions, our interests. There are other parts, perhaps, which might cross and thwart the turn of our minds, or our views in life; take away some of our comforts, or deprive us even of some conveniences. With these parts we care not to form any acquaintance, lest conscience should insist on our obedience, or trouble and torment us for our disobedience. There are not unfrequently, therefore, certain points in reserve, of so tender and delicate a nature, that we suffer them not to be approached by others, nor indeed dare to appoach them ourselves.—But there are no reserves in St. Paul's question—"Lord, *what* wouldest thou have me to do?" Whatever it may be, whatever the difficulties, whatever the consequences—"none of those things move me"—I am ready. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

It is a maxim laid down by our blessed Saivour, that "no man can serve *two* masters." A more indisputable maxim cannot be laid down; because, as the wills of the two masters may, and probably will, be different, or even contrary, their commands will be so too; and therefore cannot be obeyed by the same person, who must soon be obliged to give up one, and adhere to the other. Plain as this truth appears to be, it is late in life before we are convinced of it; before we cease to hope, that, by a little management, we can contrive to please God and the world.

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Different was the opinion of Joshua. He did not suppose it possible, at the same time, to serve *Jehovah* and the gods of the nations. "Choose you "*whom* ye will serve—I will serve *Jehovah*." Agreeably to which, St. Paul asks, "Lord, what wilt *thou* "have me to do?" Not—what will my own inclinations, what will my friends, what will my kinsfolk, what will the world—but—"what wilt *thou*—my "Saviour and my God—what wilt *thou* have me to "do?"—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and "his righteousness, and all other things (needful) "shall be added unto you." Serve God; and the world, in the course of God's providence, will be made to serve you; and that, sometimes in a manner very surprising and unlooked for.

There is yet a different error in the conduct of men. It is when they employ themselves to discover the obligations and the failings of *others*, entirely forgetful of their own. They can tell you the duties of the king and of his ministers, and of the admirals, generals, and governors employed by them; of both houses of parliament; of the bishops and the clergy; and of all their neighbours, great and small. They can tell the duties of these respectively; they can point out the particulars in which such duties are neglected; and inform you how the neglects may still be remedied. Yet when God shall call these censors and judges of their brethren to account for their *own* duties, they will perceive, perhaps for the first time, to their utter amazement and confusion, that they have never once thought of performing *them*. To prevent so ridiculous and fatal a blunder, let it be

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observed, that St. Paul did not ask, what God would have *others* to do; but, "Lord," said he, "what "wouldest thou have *me* to do?" Show me my own duty; and it sufficeth. Had the men of whom we have been speaking preferred this petition to God, he would have taught them, in the first place, to bestow much of their time and thoughts upon their own concerns, and little upon those of others, unless where commanded by him so to do, as a part of their own duty.

The last mistake that shall be mentioned, relative to our inquiries after the will of God, is, when we make those inquiries, as matter of speculation only, as an amusement of the mind. For to this purpose are the Scriptures often applied; and it is possible to make them the subjects of our writings and conversations, without any design or desire of reducing them to practice. Whereas there is no article of faith which does not involve in it a corresponding duty. For, surely, to every one who repeats the Creed may God justly be considered as saying—"If I "be a *God*, where is my worship? If I be a *Father*, "where is my obedience? If I be *Almighty*, where "is my trust? If I be a *Creator*, where is my serv-"ice? If I be a *Redeemer*, where is my love? If I "be a *Judge*, where is my fear?" In matters of religion, where there is something to be known, there is always something to be done. St. Paul, therefore, asked not—"Lord, what wouldest thou have me to "*know?*" but—"Lord, what wouldest thou have me "to *do?*"

In a word—This question, which was thus asked

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by St. Paul, at the beginning of his conversion, should be asked by us, to the end of our lives, in all circumstances, those more especially that may be new and difficult. When we thus turn our thoughts to God, and sincerely supplicate for the divine direction, by his grace bringing to our minds the instructions in the Scriptures adapted to our case, or by some other means, as he shall see proper, we shall never fail to receive it. Convinced by unanswerable reasons *why* we should *serve*, and having formed a resolution to serve *God*, and him only, we shall never be at a loss to know *how* we should serve him.

But we cannot follow a safer guide than when we follow our own church, as she follows the Scriptures; for while she teaches us how to serve God acceptably in public with our lips, she teaches us how to serve him acceptably in private with our lives. The prayers whereby, at church, we implore for grace to perform all the various duties of Christianity, afford the best heads of self-examination at home, to discover whether we have used that grace to the purposes for which it was given; whether our improvements keep pace with our devotions. In the services of the church of England, we find the faith once delivered to the saints, and the morality once practised by them. Truth and holiness are the characteristics of her ritual. Avoiding the follies and absurdities of enthusiasm, which is religion run mad; and superstition, which is religion frighted out of its senses; she keeps the even tenour of her way, in a firm, manly, rational, cheerful piety towards God, and an un-

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bounded charity towards man. Congenial to the spirit of the British monarchy, she has shared of old in its fall and its restoration. "They have been "lovely and pleasant in their lives"—May they continue to be so, to the years of many generations!—But, from the aspect which the times wear toward both, it is easy to foretel, that whenever the day fatal to one of them shall come—if come it must—"in "their deaths they will not be divided.

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DISCOURSE XIV.

FEMALE CHARACTER.

PSALM LXXVIII. 5, 6.

He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children.

AT a time when the world resounds with the noise of war and the bustle of politics, an interval of separation from its concerns becomes more than usually agreeable. We seek and take refuge in the sanctuary with double ardour and delight. Sunday arises upon us in new beauty, and appears with fresh charms. We bless God that we have such a day to keep, and a church to which we may repair, where the weary mind, as well as the weary body, may cease a while from its labours, and be refreshed in the multitude of peace. The solemnity of the place, the decency and propriety of the services, with the sight of so many cheerful countenances attending in composure and silence to the word of God, affect the beholder with unutterable pleasure, and, what-

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ever his sentiments might have been at his first entrance, conform him by degrees to the same temper and behaviour.

This is more especially the case in an assembly met, as at present, upon the promotion of a noble and generous design for the benefit of our fellow-creatures and fellow Christians. Religion, as she descended from heaven in original purity, is the choicest gift of God to man; and charity, though the youngest, is the fairest daughter of religion. "Now abide faith, hope, and charity, these three; "but the greatest of these is charity"—the greatest, as it is a virtue subsisting in the divine mind (where faith and hope can have no place), and from thence derived to man; the greatest, as it is the end and crown of the other two; the greatest, as it is immediately connected with happiness, since we cannot do any good to others without doing more to ourselves, even in our present feelings; and the greatest, as charity will remain, when faith shall be lost in sight and hope in enjoyment. Not that this virtue will, or can, then exert itself as it does now. As God himself in another world will be men's portion, and therefore they can want nothing, charity will then act inwardly, by making us partake of that happiness which others enjoy, and, outwardly, by expressing, in ways suitable to our state, how much we are delighted with their happiness. Where this regard is mutual, as in heaven it must ever be, each person will not only increase his own felicity, but prove the occasion of heightening that of others; so that the

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principle itself will be eternally strengthening, and the effect which it produces be eternally improving.

In the present life, charity principally shows itself in attempts towards removing the hinderances of happiness, or at most in supplying materials for it; and therefore, those attempts most deserve encouragement which extend farthest; which take in both parts of the human composition; and provide, at the same time, for the bodies and the minds of those who are the objects of them; so that while the former appear clothed in the livery of charity, the latter may have put on knowledge as a vesture, and righteousness as a garment.

The following discourse shall be confined to the particular subject of the institution now before us, by first offering some thoughts upon the importance of forming the *female* character by education, and then exhibiting a picture of that character, as it ought to appear, when formed; after which, few words will be required to induce you to support a charity designed for the purpose of forming it.

I. No pains or expenses are spared in teaching *man* knowledge. Not so, in teaching it to woman. But why? Are women incapable of it? By no means. There have been instances to the contrary in every age: there are many shining ones in the present. They are what they are by education. If ignorant, it is through want of instruction, not of capacity.

It may, perhaps, be said, that they are of that sex usually styled and allowed to be the *weaker* sex. So much the more necessity is there, then, for their

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being strengthened and fortified by sound precepts well inculcated, and good examples set before them.

But do not women that are become learned, make themselves ridiculous? Perhaps they may sometimes, for want of being taught the most useful part of learning, which is *discretion*. But though some do this, others do it not. They know how to manage their learning, when they have got it; and possess it, as if they possessed it not.

Women, however, are not designed to govern the state, or to command armies; to plead in Westminster Hall, or to preach in the church; and therefore need not study the sciences leading to those several professions. But there are employments suited to them, and to which they ought to be suited; and no small degree of knowledge is required to suit them. The knowledge that is necessary for men, may not be necessary for them; but they are not, for that reason, to be left in ignorance.

A young woman that is ignorant will be idle, because she knows not what to do; if she is idle, she will soon be miserable; because, throughout the world, from the highest to the lowest, happiness consists in employment; if she is miserable, she will seek to relieve her misery by wandering abroad, running after shows and diversions. When she is arrived thus far, she may soon go farther; she may become vicious herself, and then most probably will spend the rest of her life in making others so that have the misfortune to fall in her way. And how many these may be, who can say? The bad education of women doth generally even more mischief than that of men;

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since the vices of men often proceed either from the ill education they received at first from their mothers, or else from the passions which other women inspire into them at a riper age.

Female influence always has been, and always must be, very great in the world; and therefore it is in the power of a well educated woman, whatever be her station, to do much good in it.

How valuable to a family is a prudent and faithful *servant* of this sex, and of what vast importance to the temporal interests of a master or mistress has such an one proved!—sometimes to interests of a higher nature. Curious, to this purpose, is the story told in the fifth chapter of the second book of Kings. The Syrians had invaded the land of Israel, and, among other prisoners, had brought away captive, *a little maid*, and she waited on the wife of Naaman, the king of Syria's general, a man of high renown, and in great favour at court, but afflicted with a terrible and loathsome disease, the leprosy, incurable by human means. This servant, who had been educated in the true religion, and therefore knew the power of the God of Israel, and the miracles wrought by the hands of his prophets, grieved at the unhappy condition of her new master, expressed her wishes to her mistress that he would apply for help to Elisha. "Would God," said she, "my lord were "with the prophet that is in Samaria; for he would "recover him of his leprosy." The words were so remarkable, that presently "one went in, and told "his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid, that "is of the land of Israel." The consequence was,

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that the general took a journey to the prophet, and was not only cured of his leprosy, but became a convert to the true religion, and worshipped the God of Elisha. And how often have persons in the highest stations been excited to good, or restrained from evil, at the instance or by the example of an inferior in the train of their own servants, who had been taught in early youth, what *they* perhaps had never learned, or, in the hour of passion, had forgotten!

The importance of female education will rise in our opinion, if we consider women as persons who may become *wives* and *mistresses* of families. In this situation, they have duties to perform which lie at the very foundation of human life; the support or the ruin of families depends upon their conduct. They have the direction of household affairs; they, consequently, determine the greatest concerns of mankind, and form the good or evil manners of almost all the world. A judicious woman, that is diligent and religious, is the very soul of a house; she gives orders for the good things of this life, and for those too of eternity. Men themselves, who have all the authority in public, cannot yet by their deliberations establish any effectual good, without the concurring assistance of women to carry them into execution. Besides their authority and their continual attendance in their houses, they have the advantage of being by nature careful, attentive to particulars, industrious, insinuating, and persuasive. And how can the men hope for any content in life, if their strictest friendship and alliance, which is that of marriage, be turned into disappointment and bitterness?

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But a matter of more weight is still behind. As *mothers*, women have, for some time, and that the most critical time too, the care of the education of their children of both sorts, who, in the next age, are to make up the great body of the world. And as the health and strength, or sickliness and weakness of our bodies, are very much owing to their methods of treating us when we are young; so the soundness or folly of our minds are not less owing to those first tempers and ways of thinking, which we eagerly received from the love, tenderness, authority, and constant conversation of our mothers. As we call our first language our *mother* tongue, so we may as justly call our first tempers our *mother* tempers; and perhaps it may be found more easy to forget the language, than to part entirely with those tempers which we learnt in the nursery.

That mothers, where they themselves have been well instructed, are more *capable* than men, of teaching their children, will appear from these considerations—First, from their circumstances and condition of life: they are more within doors; have more time to spare; are best acquainted with their children's tempers; and always have them in their eye. Secondly, they have an advantage from their own make and frame of mind; they are generally more apprehensive of danger, and of what may come hereafter, than men are. This makes them more concerned for their children's everlasting welfare, and solicitous to teach them what they know themselves. Then, they are of a milder disposition; can bear with their children's infirmities, and correct them with a ten-

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derness which even recommends a necessary severity. By this means their children come to love them, and to be fond of their instruction, and to imitate their example. Besides all this, they are more patient of this kind of labour than men are. It is not the child's dulness, nor the necessity of often repeating the same things, that will weary or discourage the pious mother. And, which is not to be omitted, she has an opportunity of seeing whether her instructions are apprehended and followed; of destroying vices, while they are in bud; as also, of encouraging every commendable word and action, in its season.

In one word—The mothers have an opportunity, both by their instruction and example, of fixing such lasting impressions upon their children's minds, as, by the blessing of God upon their endeavours, neither the iniquity of the age, nor the enemy of mankind, shall ever be able to blot out[b].

Some very remarkable facts, confirming what has been said, deserve your utmost attention.

At this day, the children of Jews are always under the mother's care and instruction, if living, till they come to a certain age; during which time,

[b] "A proper and effectual education of the female sex, is one "of the very first steps to be taken for the effectual improvement "and civilization of the whole empire. For children fall inevi- "tably into the hands and under the care of women, in their in- "fant state: therefore their first and strongest impressions will "be good or bad, salutary or destructive, according to the mo- "rals, character, and conduct of those women under whose "early tuition they may fall." Dr. Brown's sketch of a plan of legislation for the Russian empire, given in the *Biographia Britannica*, vol. ii. 664, 2d edition.

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they are taught to read the law, and so well instructed in its worth, and aim, and meaning, that they are very hardly, if ever, brought over to Christianity, either by the temporal or spiritual advantages which attend it.

One of the deputies at the synod of Dort informed that assembly, that in his country there was scarce a person, how poor and mean soever his condition was, but could read and give a tolerable account of his faith. This, he said, was owing chiefly to the great care that had been taken to instruct the *women*, who, when they came to be mothers, scarce ever failed to instruct their children.

St. Paul, addressing himself to his beloved Timothy, has these remarkable words—"That I may be "filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the "unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in "thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; "and I am persuaded that in thee also." You see, that the faith and piety, here commended and gloried in, were continued and propagated in the family by the women *chiefly*. That "unfeigned faith," and that zeal for the glory of God, which was found in Timothy, and which qualified him for a bishop, or overseer, in the church of God, was derived to *him* from his *mother* and *grandmother*, whose instruction and examples he followed; and so became an instrument of great good to the world.

Nor are examples wanting among ourselves of virtue and piety, the fear and the blessing of God, continued in families for many generations, by the religious care and concern of mothers, that have had a

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Christian education; who, however they may excuse themselves from some other labours, which attend the bringing up of their children, if they neglect *this*, are inexcusable; neither the tenderness of their constitution, nor the care of their families (much less the pleasures of the world); neither their quality on the one hand, nor their poverty on the other, will ever free them from the guilt, and infamy, and curse, which will attend those who shall suffer their children to grow up without principles, and without morality.

To the foregoing considerations it may be added, that virtue is not more the business of men, than it is of women, who are the one half of the human race, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and designed for eternal life. They are to live for themselves; they have as great a share in the rational nature as men have; they have as much reason to pretend to, and as much necessity to aspire after the highest accomplishments of a Christian and solid virtue, as the gravest and wisest among Christian philosophers. When we spoil them by a wrong education, we spoil that part of the world which would otherwise, perhaps, furnish most instances of an eminent and exalted goodness; since they are naturally possessed of tempers and dispositions which, if duly improved by proper studies, and sober methods of education, would, in all probability, carry them to greater heights of piety, than are to be found among the generality of men. That women have no souls, is an assertion, which might proceed from the teacher of a *false* religion; by the Founder of the *true*, they

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are regarded in a very different light. To them were communicated the first tidings of his resurrection, and they had the honour to be appointed apostles to the apostles themselves.

Whether, therefore, we consider the capacities of women for attaining *knowledge*, or the sad consequences of their being left in *ignorance*, their influence on society as *servants*, as *wives*, as *mistresses of families*, and as *mothers;* or their constituting the *one half of the human race, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and designed for eternal life;* every way is evident the great importance of forming the female character by education.—To exhibit a picture of that character as it ought to appear, when formed, was the

Second thing proposed.—The picture with which I shall present you, among other advantages, has that of antiquity. It was drawn by a masterly hand near three thousand years ago. It may be necessary, therefore, to remove some of the effects of the time, and retouch the lines that have been clouded and obscured by length of years; in plain terms, to explain some parts of the description, which relate to ancient manners and customs, and show how they may be usefully applied to those of our own age and country. The description I mean, is that left us of a virtuous woman, by the wisest of men, in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs; a description, which all mothers and mistresses should teach the female pupils under their care to read and learn by heart.

Prov. xxxi. 10. "Who can find a virtuous wo-

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"man? for her price is far above rubies." Such an one is to be found, but not without some care and diligence in the search. She is well worth the pains taken in the forming her, and more to be valued by her happy possessor than the brightest diamond in the mines of the East.

11. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust "in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." A well-nurtured woman is man's best and truest friend. Her fidelity is inviolable as the covenant of the Most High, and her purity unsullied as the light of heaven. Absent, as well as present, her husband relies upon her, for the preservation of his possessions, and of herself, the dearest and most precious of all. With such a steward at home, freed from care and anxiety, he goes forth to his own employment, whatever it may be. He has no occasion to rob others by sea or land; to plunder provinces, or starve nations. Instead of her squandering his substance to gratify her own vanity and folly, the economy of his wife furnishes the supplies, and nothing is wanting in due time and place.

12. "She will do him good, and not evil, all the "days of her life." She will never abuse this confidence reposed in her, but endeavour to render herself daily more and more worthy of it. And even if her endeavours should not always meet with the desired success; if the good man should sometimes happen to be a little out of spirits, or out of temper; she will not therefore become so too. Her cheerfulness will revive and restore him. She will still "do him "good, and not evil," while he lives; and if she sur-

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vive him, will continue to show the same attention and regard to his family and to his character. "My "Servius," said the Roman Valeria, holding in her arms the urn which contained the ashes of her husband—"my Servius, though dead to the rest of the "world, can never be otherwise than alive to me."

Solomon's description of a virtuous woman consists of twenty-two verses. It is well worthy your observation, that eleven of these verses (half the number) are taken up in setting forth her *industry* and the effects of it. I shall recite all these together, that you may see what a variety of magnificent language is made use of, to describe her different employments, to recommend simplicity of manners, and make good housewifery and honest labour to be admired, in the rich and noble, as well as the poor and obscure among women. For you must bear in mind, that in works of the several kinds here mentioned, queens and princesses, of old time, disdained not to be occupied. You will likewise be pleased to consider, that if the rich are exempted from the necessity of working for *themselves*, they cannot be better employed than in working for the *poor*; since "the "coats and garments, made by the charity of Dor-"cas, were judged the best proofs of her goodness, "that could be submitted to the inspection of an "apostle."

13. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh "willingly with her hands. 19. She layeth her hands "to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. "17. She girdeth her loins with strength, and "strengtheneth her arms. 15. She riseth also, while

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"it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, "and a portion to her maidens. 27. She looketh "well to the ways of her household, and eateth not "the bread of idleness. 21. She is not afraid of the "snow for her household; for they are all clothed with "double garments. 22. She maketh herself cover-"ings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. "24. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and deli-"vereth girdles to the merchant. 18. She perceiv-"eth that her merchandise is good: her candle "goeth not out by night. 14. She is like the mer-"chant ships; she bringeth her food from afar. "16. She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with "the fruits of her hands she planteth a vineyard."—On account of this her marvellous and unceasing diligence, with the many and great advantages derived thereby to her family, well may it be said, as it is said of her, 25. "Strength and honour are her cloth-"ing; and she shall rejoice in time to come."

But the honour is not confined to herself. It extendeth to her friend and her companion in life; 23. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he "sitteth among the elders of the land;" that is, he is known as her husband: as a man blessed with such a wife; as indebted, perhaps, for his promotion, to the wealth acquired by her management at home (for honours are seldom open to the poor); for the splendour and elegance of his apparel, to the labour of her hands; and it may be, for the preservation and establishment of his virtue and integrity, to the encouragement in all that is holy, and just, and good, fur-

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nished by her example as well as her conversation, the nature of which is thus described—

26. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in "her tongue is the law of kindness." She thinks before she speaks; and therefore, neither introduces a bad subject, nor disgraces a good one by an improper manner of discoursing upon it. And as charity reigns in her heart, nothing that is uncharitable proceeds out of her mouth: all is lenient and healing. To express the whole in a few words, she says nothing that is foolish, nothing that is ill-natured. But her charity is shown in deeds as well as words—

20. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, "she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." This is yet another good effect of her economy and management. She is not only able to provide plentifully for her household, but has always something in store for the poor. Since what avails a charitable disposition, where vanity, folly, and extravagance have taken away the power to exert it? In vain is "the hand stretched out," when there is nothing in it.

Having duly considered this finished character of the virtuous woman, we shall not be surprised at the praise bestowed upon it, in the remaining verses of the chapter.

28. "Her children rise up, and call her blessed; "her husband also, and he praiseth her," saying, 29. "Many daughters have done virtuously; but "thou excellest them all." Happy the children of such a mother; they will be living proofs of the care taken by her in their education, when she taught them

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to walk, by the paths of honour and virtue, to the mansions of rest and glory. Happy the husband of such a wife, who sees all things prosper under her direction, and the blessing of Heaven derived to his family through her. They will all join in proclaiming, that among women who do well, honour is chiefly due to the virtuous and diligent wife, the affectionate and sensible mother.

30. "Favour," or rather, "gracefulness, is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that fear-"eth the Lord, she shall be praised." A graceful person, and a set of fine features, are valuable things, but they are not always to be trusted; they may conceal tempers and dispositions very different from those one should have expected to find: and bitterer than wormwood must then be the disappointment of the man who has been directed to his choice by no other considerations. This, I say, *may* be the case. It is not often so, let us hope. God forbid it should. The face ought to be an index to the mind, and when all is fair without, as it is said of the king's daughter in the psalm, "all should be glorious within." But, let beauty have its due praise, and suppose what you will of it—suppose all that the poets say of it to be true; still, the wise men tells you, it is *vain*, it is in its nature transient, fleeting, perishing; it is the flower of the spring, which must fade in autumn; and when the blossom falls, if no fruit succeed, of what value, I pray you, is the tree? The grave is already opening for the most elegant person that moves, and the worms are in waiting to feed on the fairest face that is beholden. Labour, then, for that

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which endureth for ever: let your chief pains be bestowed on that part of the human composition which shall flourish in immortal youth, when the world and all that is in it shall disappear, and come no more into mind.—"A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall "be praised."

31. "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let "her own works praise her in the gates."

The crown which her own hands have thus formed shall be placed upon her head, as it were by general consent, even in this life; and her good deeds, celebrated in the public assemblies, shall diffuse an odour grateful as the smell of Eden, as the cloud of frankincense ascending from the holy altar. When her task is ended, the answer of a good conscience, and the blessings of all around, sweeter than the sweetest music, shall chant her to her repose; till awakened on the great morning of the world, descending angels shall introduce this daughter of Jerusalem into the joy of her Lord.

Such is the female character, and such the importance of forming it by education. Without education it cannot be formed; for we were all born equally ignorant, and are what we are by instruction. Mothers who have not been themselves taught, cannot teach their daughters; and mothers who are poor, cannot pay for having them taught. Such mothers must be therefore assisted; the children of such mothers, who appear now ranged before you, ask the continuance of your good-will and kind assistance, to carry on the work of their education. Be the means of teaching *them*, and they may teach their children

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after them, to the years of many generations. There is no end of the good that may be thus done; the effects of it may be found upon the earth, when our Redeemer shall return to judgement.

A school of this sort, properly managed and conducted—what is it, but a nursery of virtue and true religion, from whence will come forth into the church of God many a modest Rebekah, a devout Hannah, a wise Esther, an industrious Martha, an humble pious Mary; a credit to their own age, and a blessing to posterity.

Such a school is a charity of the most comprehensive nature.

It is a charity to the whole *nation*, to prevent these children from growing up in idleness and vice, to be the burthen and the scandal of a Christian country; and to render them, on the contrary, useful in their stations, and the glory of their times; for such are industry and goodness, in the cottage, as well as in the palace.

It is a charity to this *city*, to hinder so many innocent creatures from being tempted to walk the streets, or hide themselves in ill houses.

It is a charity to *families*; not only to those poor families out of which these children are taken, but to those good families into which they shall be hereafter transplanted for sober, faithful maid-servants; and, in time, a charity to their own families, when, by God's blessing, they shall be well disposed of in the world; when, having become happy wives and mothers, they shall govern houses of their own, and bring

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up their children in the like nurture and fear of the Lord.

That these good effects may be produced, the mothers must be warned not to detain the children at home a moment longer than is absolutely necessary, nor ever let them have a bad example before their eyes when they are there.

And as the success of a school must always depend on the fidelity and diligence of those who are over it, let *them* remember, that they receive the pay of charity; and that they cannot neglect their duty, without adding this aggravation to their crime, the abuse of one of the best intended institutions in the world.

But all is at an end at once, unless *you* are pleased to continue your kind subscriptions and contributions. If you withhold your hands, you pull down your own work. Whatever you give at other times, add something now, severally as you can afford—and add it cheerfully; for God loves cheerfulness in giving, as in every thing else. Hard hearts and empty hands he does not love. You owe it to his blessing that you are not in want yourselves: of his own do you give him; and how can you bestow it better?—I need not tell the female part of my audience, that, in justice to their sex, *they* are more especially concerned; since they, I am sure, have not forgotten a striking feature in the picture which has been set before them—"She stretcheth out her hand to the "poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the "needy."

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DISCOURSE XV.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

2 CORINTHIANS, XIII. 11.

Be of one mind.

THE apostle, in this verse, taking leave of his Corinthians, bequeaths to them the same legacy which the blessed Jesus bequeathed to all his followers. "Peace I leave with you," said the Master; "my "peace I give unto you." "Finally, brethren," says this his faithful disciple,—"be of one mind, live in "peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with "you." Such are the conditions upon the performance of which we may hope for the presence of God in the midst of us. He who "maketh men to be "of one mind in a house," delighteth to dwell in the house where they are so. The spirit of discord resides in the world, that scene of confusion, that mystic *Babel*. *Jerusalem* is a city at unity in itself; and is therefore the habitation of "the Prince of Peace."

The *nature* of that duty, which is here recommended by St. Paul, appears to be sufficiently expressed by the word *concord*, or *unanimity*, on which the text is an exact paraphrase, *το αυτο φρονειτε*, "Think "the same thing," or "be of one mind."

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And so necessary, indeed, is this agreement found to be for the prosecution of any design, that bad men cannot execute their schemes without a temporary concord, founded, for want of better principles, either upon the mutual interest of all parties, or a fantastical kind of honour, which answers its purpose, if it keep them together, till the deed of darkness be done, and the prey divided. Common robbers and pirates find the necessity of this. Nay, if Satan's kingdom were divided against itself, it must presently fall. But these are combinations and conspiracies against the welfare and happiness of mankind, with which therefore we are no farther concerned, than to learn a useful lesson from our enemies, and to rest assured, that the kingdom of our Master must subsist, as all other kingdoms and societies do, by the cultivation of peace and unity among those who are the subjects of it.

If we take a view of discord at its introduction into the world, we shall find that it was threefold. The first between God and man, occasioned by man's transgression of the divine law, which estranged him from his Maker, whom from thenceforth he feared, as "an avenger ready to execute wrath upon him "that had done evil." The second between man and himself, caused by the accusations of conscience thereupon. The third between man and man, owing to unruly desires and passions, continually interfering, and never to be satisfied.

In opposition to this threefold discord introduced into the world by the evil spirit, the concord effected in the church by the good Spirit of God is likewise

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threefold. Man is reconciled to God by the righteousness of Christ, through faith; to himself, by the answer of a conscience thus purged from sin; and to his brethren, by Christian charity shed abroad in his heart.

All these operations worketh one and the same Spirit; whence the unity of which we are now speaking, is styled "the unity of the Spirit," which is represented as encircling all things in heaven and earth with a *bond* of peace. And is not the Spirit to the church, or body of Christ, what the breath is to the body natural? While *that* continues in the human frame, the parts of which it is composed adhere tenaciously together; but when God taketh away the breath, the contexture is soon dissolved, and they turn again to their dust. The inference suggested by this comparison, with regard to any church whose members are disunited and crumbled into schisms and factions, is too melancholy to be dwelt upon. When the Spirit came down upon the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, it is said, that "they were all "with one accord in one place;" and afterwards, when inspired by him, we are told, "they lifted up "their voices with one accord," like the pipes of a musical instrument properly tuned, sounding forth in unison the praises of God.

To induce brethren to "dwell together in unity," God seemeth to have employed every kind of argument. He hath erected both worlds upon the basis of concord, and made harmony to be, as it were, the life and the soul of the universe. I shall endeavour to point out some striking examples of its bene-

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ficial influences, in the *natural*, the *social*, and the *spiritual* system.

In contemplating the scenes of nature, where indeed there is neither voice nor language, yet it is impossible not to observe how the elements conspire to serve God and to bless mankind. St. Clement, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, enlarges upon this thought to the following effect: "The heavens de-
"clare the glory of their great Creator, uniformly
"performing their operations in obedience to his
"decrees. At the word of the Almighty, the sun
"ariseth, and knoweth his going down. The hea-
"venly bodies run their appointed circuits in concert,
"and their motions clash not. Day and night, spring
"and summer, autumn and winter, in peaceful order
"give place to, and succeed each other. The earth,
"without murmuring or disputing, yields her in-
"crease at the stated seasons. Winds blow, and
"waters roll, in subserviency to the will of him who
"made them; the very waves of the ocean practise
"submission; they pass not the bounds prescribed
"them, but under the regulation of that powerful
"voice which said, Hitherto shall ye come, but no
"farther, they only serve to fill up the mighty chorus
"of inanimate beings that are incessantly, in their
"way, rendering homage to the Lord of nature.
"They continue this day according to his ordinance,
"for all things serve him in their several places,
"without let or molestation. Animals and insects,
"the least and most defenceless, do yet maintain,
"by mutual agreement, their respective societies,
"and preserve themselves from their numerous and

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"potent adversaries. Thus doth all creation si-
"lently reprove the eccentric motions of contentious
"men, who oppose the will of God, and devour one
"another."

From a survey of nature, proceed we to inspect the make and constitution of man himself, who subsisteth by a union of two very different parts, a soul and a body, between which there is a kind of marriage, not to be dissolved "till death them do part." They live together, they rejoice together, they suffer together: and when parted, as the body loses all its form and comeliness, its sight, its hearing, its voice, its motion, its very shape and figure, so the soul is described in holy writ as being restless and unquiet, till the time of reunion comes, crying out, from beneath the altar, with anxiety and earnestness, "How
"long, O Lord, holy and true?"

Nor less observable is the union which obtains between the members of which the body is composed, and by whose mutual good offices it is supported and preserved, according to the apostle's just and beautiful account of this matter—"God hath set the
"members every one of them in the body, as it hath
"pleased him. And if they were all one member,
"where were the body? But now are there many
"members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot
"say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor
"again the head to the feet, I have no need of you—
"But God hath tempered the body together, that
"there should be no schism in the body, but that
"the members should have the same care one for
"another. And whether one member suffer, all the

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"members suffer with it; or one member be honour-
"ed, all the members rejoice with it."

It is not more necessary that the members should be joined together in the body, than that mankind should be united in civil society. Man comes into the world utterly helpless, insomuch that, without the care and assistance of others, not a single individual of the human species could be reared, but the earth must be forthwith unpeopled. And therefore it is, that an all-wise Providence has implanted in our nature that affection which is found to prevail between parents and children, between brethren and sisters, between those of the same family, kindred, house, city, or nation; between those of the same age, or the same vocation. Such are the means used to invite and almost force men to live in peace and concord, some degree of which God hath made absolutely necessary, by rendering it impossible, as at the beginning he had declared it was not good, for man to be alone. Hence that original union, "in-
"stituted and ordained by him in the time of man's
"innocency," to be the fountain of every other relation, the source of all those blessings and comforts which result from society.

Thus salutary are the influences of concord in the *natural* and the *social* system. Let us now see how the case stands in that *spiritual* world, of which we became citizens at our baptism.

And here, if we look up, and behold by faith the glory of the eternal Trinity, we must presently fall down, like the elders before the throne, and in the power of the divine Majesty worship the Unity.

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"There be Three that bear record in heaven, the "Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these "Three are ONE." Three persons; one God. Three, as evidently appears by the different offices which they have graciously vouchsafed to undertake in the work of our redemption; one in substance, and duration, and glory, and majesty, and power, and might, and dominion. And as they are one, so all the angels and blessed spirits in the courts of heaven make their sound to be heard as one, in blessing, and praising, and magnifying them, for ever and ever. Not a discordant note is heard in all that celestial choir, while "they rest not day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which "was, and is, and is to come!"

From heaven we descend again to earth, with him who did so, for us men and for our salvation, to the end that as body and soul are one man, so God and man might be one Christ, who was to live and to die for us; to suffer, and to save; as man to suffer, and as God to save. He could not have suffered unless he had been man; he could not have saved by suffering unless he had been God, "God manifest in "the flesh." By this amazing and most beneficent union, the law was kept, the ransom paid, sin done away, Satan overcome, death swallowed up, immortality brought to light, man redeemed, hell confounded, earth made to rejoice, and heaven peopled with glorified saints.

By the union of God and man in the person of Christ, another union was effected between Christ and the church. For is the vine united to the

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branches that spring from it? "I am the vine, ye "are the branches." Is the head joined to the body? "God hath made him head over all things, to the "church, which is his body." Is there a strict union between man and wife? "This is a great mystery, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church: we "are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his "bones." By means of this divine junction, the blessings which Christ obtained by his death and passion become ours. "As the branches cannot "bear fruit, except they abide in the vine; no more "can we, except we abide in him," and so "partake "of his root and fatness." From him, as the head, "the whole body of the church, fitly joined together, "and compacted by that which every joint suppli-"eth, according to the effectual working in the "measure of every part, maketh increase of the "body, to the edifying of itself in love." And if we consider the church as being espoused to the Lamb, she thereby becomes endowed with his excellencies, she takes his name, and shares his unspeakable dignity, his everlasting love, and almighty protection. These are the happy effects of the union between Christ and the church.

One more consequence should follow from it, and would to God it were every where visible, *viz.* an union among Christians. Joined to one common head, they should be joined likewise to each other, "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and "all the members of that one body, being many, are "one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we

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"all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or "Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. Ye are the "body of Christ, and members in particular." By concord in the church, the kingdom of Christ is established on earth as it is in heaven, where there is no rebellion or opposition to the will of God, but all are unanimous in doing it. By the Gospel, enmity was abolished, and never should have been heard of more. All nations, however different before in rites, ceremonies, languages, and tempers, were called to the same grace, incorporated into one city of peace, and made to communicate with each other in holy offices, in prayers and in sacraments, in devotion and charity, living together in the house of their heavenly Father, and eating of one bread at his table. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are "called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one "faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, "who is above all, and through all, and in you "all."

There was a time, and it is pleasing to look back to it, when a Christian, furnished with proper credentials from his bishop, might travel through the world, from east to west and from north to south, and be received to communion with his brethren in any part of the globe then known. There will be a time, and it is comfortable to look forward to it, when infidelity, heresy, and schism shall come to an end, and there shall be no contention among the redeemed, but in giving glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne. In the mean season, as they will stand fairest for heaven who

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live in concord upon earth, let us consider how we may best perform this part of our duty.

And here we may, it is presumed, lay it down for one rule, that he who would live in peace and harmony with his brethren, his kinsfolk, and his neighbours, must himself be first reconciled to his Maker. "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace;" be at peace with him, and thine own conscience, and then thou shalt be at peace with all around thee. Sin is the universal leaven, which, by its fermentation, sours the temper. While the mind is troubled and disquieted, unsettled and uncertain with regard to its spiritual concerns; while it is under the guilt and dominion of a lust, not willing to break its chain, and yet galled with wearing it; the man will be fretful and peevish, quarrelsome and contentious in his conversation with others, venting the uneasiness which he feels within, on all who have the misfortune to be near him. Whereas, let him "return to the "Almighty" by a deep and hearty repentance, and "put away iniquity from him;" and a sense of Heaven's mercy in effecting his deliverance, will quickly "purge out the old leaven;" joy and love will diffuse themselves into every corner of his heart, which will now overflow with tenderness and kindness towards those with whom he is concerned.

In proof of this assertion, let the appeal be made to a matter of fact within every one's experience. A person coming down from the altar, after having communicated, feels no sentiments but those of fervent charity towards all men. And why? Because, having repented him of his sins, and had the pardon of them

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sealed to him in the holy sacrament, there is then such a sense of God's mercy through Christ impressed upon his soul, as inclines, and even compels him to forgive and love others, as God hath loved and forgiven him. We should justly regard him as a monster, who was, at that time, disposed to hatred and contention. Wherever the Spirit of God comes with the word of reconciliation, strife and animosity presently give place and disappear. When the Eucharist has been celebrated, it is with Christians at the holy table as it was with the family in the ark, the dove has been there with the olive branch, and the waters are subsided. Only, therefore, let them, from time to time, by proper spiritual exercises, by reading, meditation, and prayer, renew the impressions then made, reducing their religion from a profession put on at stated seasons, to a constant, uniform principle of action in common life, which gives us the real character of every man; only let this be done, and the tempers which they bring from the Lord's table will continue with them, and become those of every day and every hour. The primitive Christians communicated daily, and all Christians should be fit to *communicate* daily, because they should be fit to *die* daily, standing habitually prepared with dispositions of gratitude and duty to their heavenly Father, of love and affection towards their earthly brethren.

A *second* rule for the attainment of concord, shall be this: Let every man endeavour, by the grace of Christ, to moderate his desires of earthly things. "Whence," saith St. James to the Christians of his

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time, "come wars and fightings among you?" Whence come schisms and heresies in the church, factions and seditions in the state, enmities and heart-burnings between families and individuals? "Come "they not hence, even of your lusts, which war in "your members?" An inordinate thirst after power, pleasure, fame, or profit, is at the bottom, whatever may be pretended. The humble and contented man quarrels with nobody, since, fully satisfied with the station in which God hath placed him, and intent upon discharging the duties of it, he is not eager after any of those things for which others are, with so much animosity, contending. But how can we wonder that there is strife on earth, when we read, that, "there was war in heaven?" nor could peace be restored in those blissful regions, till the evil principle which disturbed it was ejected.

The *third* and last rule which I shall mention as proper to be observed for the preservation of concord amongst us, is to defend the just rights of our ecclesiastical establishment, which connect and cement us together in one communion, as members of a church happily freed from the errors and the corruptions of Rome, and put under a government and discipline constructed, as far as the times would permit, upon the platform of primitive Christianity. Those wise and good men, who found it necessary to abolish the usurped jurisdiction of the Pope in these kingdoms, saw plainly at the same time, that religion could not even be *reformed*, as it ought to be, or indeed the very existence of it continued, without proper authority in proper hands. And to argue

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that, because a right may be abused, therefore there neither is, nor ought to be, any such right in a community, is a method of reasoning, which, if it could ever pass in the world for sound and conclusive, would soon banish order and peace out of it for evermore. We have no cause to expect that *angels* should come down from heaven, to take upon them the administration of government; and authority in the hands of *men* must ever, like all other things, be liable to abuse. But he who therefore fancies it were better there should be none, would find himself strangely mistaken, on making the experiment. The truth is, that the great body of mankind must be directed by some or other, both in temporals and spirituals. And the present question really is not, whether we shall subscribe to articles of religion, but, as it will appear in the end, who shall draw them up, and impose the subscription; in one word, whether the church of England will preserve in her hands the power of granting a toleration to others, or be reduced to the necessity of accepting it from others, if they will grant it to her, which it is ten thousand to one that they never will, should God, for our sins, permit them to effect a change, and get into power.

Loud were the clamours, in the last century, against the tyranny of the hierarchy. Its demolition was attempted and achieved by the advocates for what was then called *religious liberty*. When this was done, the poor, ignorant, deluded populace expected that the kingdom of Christ should

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immediately appear, and that from thenceforth they should be subject, in matters of conscience, to him only. But how different was the event! The little finger of presbytery proved to be thicker than the loins of prelacy. Those who were of a *different persuasion* were now told, that *toleration* was *the establishment of iniquity by a law.* And yet the proceedings of presbytery itself were found to be mild and moderate, when compared with the insufferable insolence and cruelty of its supplanter, independency.

It was proposed, in those days, to make Christians of one heart and mind, and to introduce a heaven upon earth by the destruction of the church, which, though the only centre of unity, was, at that time, thought to stand in its way. But so far was this from being the case, that, in the few years between her fall and resurrection, there sprang up a multitude of religious sects, contradicting, reviling, and persecuting each other. Truth was torn in pieces, and blown about by the breath of contending factions, so that a remnant of it was hardly to be found; and men were either driven back to popery, or tempted to an atheistical disbelief of all religion.

How far the same consequences might follow the execution of a plan for admitting every man into the ministry who will only declare in general, that he "believes the Scriptures," which all the heretics of former ages, and all the sectaries of the last century, would at any time have declared—deserves your most serious consideration.

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Peace, without all doubt, is an admirable blessing. But in giving up truth for it, we should, in the first place, pay too dear for the purchase, and, in the second, be defrauded, after all, of that for which we bargained.

There are times when the most peaceable men in the world will find it their bounden duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the "saints;" and it is submitted, whether the present be not such a time: since, to erase from our services (if indeed we shall be permitted to have any) the grand fundamental article of that faith, is the avowed end and design of the projected reformation. He who exhorted his Corinthians to be "of "one mind," never thought it a matter of *indifference* whether they were so in the belief and propagation of TRUTH or of ERROR. To speak out plainly—if Arianism be a truth, it is certainly high time that it were established; but if it be an error, and one of the most pernicious tendency, the church cannot be too vigilant in guarding those fences which the prevarications and evasions of her adversaries made it necessary to raise for her security. One thing in the history of Arianism is worthy notice, that its partisans, within less than forty years after they had rejected the Nicene doctrine, drew up seventeen different confessions of faith, and when they had done, would abide by none of them. With what propriety men of this cast are wont to exclaim against *creed-makers*, or how well qualified they are to have the modelling of *articles*

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and *liturgies*, you will determine; and may God Almighty enable us upon this, and every other occasion, as far as lieth in us, to maintain *truth* and preserve *unity*, to reject *error* and avoid *confusion!*

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DISCOURSE XVI.

DUTY OF REPENTANCE ILLUSTRATED.

JEREMIAH, VIII. 7.

The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the Lord.

THE whole passage is well deserving of attention, both for matter and manner: the matter, of the utmost importance; the manner, to the last degree engaging and affecting.

The day of Jerusalem's visitation drew near: destruction was coming upon her, like a whirlwind out of the north. Jeremiah appeared with a commission from above to predict as much, and withal to assign the reason. It was—not that the people had sinned—more or less all have sinned: not that they had grievously sinned—all sin may be forgiven; but that having sinned, and having grievously sinned, they refused to repent, without doing which no forgiveness can be obtained; it cannot indeed be expected. That had happened to Israel, which happens often to others; temptations to evil had prevailed; single acts had been improved into habits, and habits had grown inveterate, till they had

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at length lost the power, and even the desire, to reform and amend.

In this situation of things, the Almighty is introduced expostulating with his people: "Moreover "thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, "Shall they fall, and not arise? Shall he turn away, "and not return?" In the whole circle of common life, where men are usually guided by common sense, is there any instance to be found of a similar conduct? Was it ever seen, was it ever heard, that when a man had experienced the misfortune of falling, he should not wish and endeavour to rise again; that when he had, by mistake, gone out of his way, he should not, upon better information, be desirous of returning into it?—"Why then is this people of "Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding" —one that is never to cease, or have an end?— "They hold fast deceit"—and knowing it to be but deceit—for such every sinner well knows it to be—yet, "they refuse to return."

God is next pleased to speak of himself (after the manner of men) as inclining his ear, and, with the affection of a parent, fondly listening to catch the first accents of sorrow and contrition that should break forth from the relenting heart of his offending child. "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not "aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, "saying, What have I done?"—No remorse, no reflection, no sensibility; hardened in vice, and regardless of danger, they pursued with fury and impetuosity their way to perdition; "every one turned "to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle."

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This earnest expostulation and tender complaint are succeeded by a beautiful apostrophe to the birds of the air, that species of them styled *birds of passage.* They by instinct return annually, at a set time, to the country they had left; whereas, by all the reasoning and all the exhortation in the world, obdurate man cannot be prevailed upon to forsake his iniquity, and return to God who made him. "Even "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed "times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swal-"low, observe the time of their coming; but my "people know not the judgement of the Lord.

This is a method of instruction often pursued in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament. "Ask the beasts, and they shall teach you:" "Behold "the fowls of the air, which sow not, neither do they "reap, nor gather into barns," yet can read a lecture to those who do. Thus the sluggard is sent for information and correction to the ant, the unthankful to the ox, the distrustful to the ravens; and here, the wilful impenitent is placed under the tuition of the stork and the turtle, the crane and the swallow. The dumb creatures are made to reprove the madness and folly of proud rationals; and the argument enters forcibly into the understanding, while the image under which it is conveyed delights the imagination.

The representation of the duty of repentance thus set before us by the prophet, seems peculiarly adapted to the present time of the year, and the solemn season upon which we have just entered, and therefore may suggest some useful considerations on the *nature* of

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the duty, the *motives* to its performance, and the *rules* by which it should be conducted.

I. Respecting the *nature* of the duty; the similitude adopted in the text directs us to consider it as a *return*, a *treading back* our steps, as the birds of passage return, or come back, to the country from which they had departed. And this, indeed, is the idea generally employed in the Old Testament—"Return, O backsliding daughter;" "Return from your evil ways;" "Return unto the Lord your God;" "Turn thou us, and we shall be turned;" and the like. But the expression being figurative, it must be opened and explained in literal terms. In order to which, it may be observed, that the word chiefly used in the New Testament to denote the duty of repentance, signifies *change of mind;* and as practice flows from principle (for as a man thinks, so will he act), a change of conduct is naturally and necessarily implied; for we should with difficulty be brought to believe, in any case of moment, that he had changed the former, who did not, in consequence, change the latter also. Now the course of a man's thinking, speaking, and acting, by an easy metaphor, common to all ages and countries, is styled his *way*, in which he is therefore said to *proceed, advance, return.*

We may then define repentance to be, *A change of mind, operating in a change of conduct.* But we shall become still better acquainted with the nature of it, if we view its process, and resolve it into its several parts in due order.

The leading step in the process must of necessity be *conviction;* since he cannot be persuaded to repent

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who is not first convinced that he has sinned: no man will think of returning *into* the right way, unless he be made sensible that he has wandered *out* of it. To produce this conviction, is not so easy a task as at first sight it may seem to be; since, when evil is pursued it is pursued under the appearance of good; by such appearance the sinner for a time is deceived, blinded, deluded, infatuated; and in this state sometimes continues to pass his life, through mere indolence, inattention, want of consideration; whence, in the Latin language, repentance is denoted by a word signifying, *coming to oneself*, *coming to one's senses*, *growing wise again*, as before the delusion took place. Conviction is produced gradually. Upon some hint given to a man, either from within or from without, he begins to suspect himself in the wrong; and then, if he be honest enough to prosecute the inquiry, discovers at length that he actually is so. Sometimes it is flashed upon the mind at once—He awakes, and the dream is at an end. Under the direction of that blessed Spirit, whose office, we are told, it is to "convince, or convict, the world of sin," it is produced by various means, by disappointments, by crosses, by losses, by sickness, by the death of a friend, by a passage in Scripture, or a discourse upon one, by the incidents of common life, or the changes that happen in the natural world; in short, there is hardly a circumstance of so trivial a nature, but that a kind Providence, in some instance or other, has been pleased to make it instrumental to this salutary purpose. On the brethren of Joseph, after an interval of more than twenty years, the conviction was wrought by the usage they experienced from him,

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when unknown, in Egypt. It put them upon reflecting, of what offence they could have been guilty in the former part of life, which might deserve to be punished in this particular manner. Conscience stepped forth, and gave the necessary information. "We "are verily guilty concerning our *brother; therefore* "is this distress come upon us." The case of David was of a more obstinate nature. A delineation of his crime under a parable was not sufficient to awaken him. Nothing could do this, but a direct, home, personal application—"*Thou* art the man."—He started from a deep sleep of ten months, and fell prostrate in the dust before his God—"I have sin-"ned!"—Let every sinner, when tempted to despair, recollect the answer, and bless the gracious Being from whom it proceeded—"The Lord hath put "away thy sin."

The next step to conviction, in the process of repentance, is *sorrow*.—The man who has offended his Maker, and is become thoroughly sensible that he has done so, and of the consequences of his having done so, cannot but be grieved to find himself in such a situation; for which reason, repentance, in the Greek language, is sometimes denominated by a word implying *after-concern*; indeed, our English term, *I repent*, in the general acceptation of it, is little more than equivalent to, *I am sorry*. If the sorrow arise merely from fear of punishment, it is called, in the language of the Schools, *attrition*, and is deemed the lowest and least honourable species of repentance[a];

[a] See Priestley on the Corruptions, &c. and Burnet there referred to, ii, 223.

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if from a desire to please God, and a tender sense of having displeased so good a Father, it is styled *contrition*, and is of a more generous and noble kind. The degree of this sorrow is varied almost infinitely by the different temperaments of mind and body in the penitents, and the different views under which sin presents itself to their several imaginations. And, therefore, the same degree is not to be exacted of all. By enthusiasm it has been not infrequently aggravated even to phrensy and madness. In Scripture it is drawn with an aspect perfectly sober, but yet described, in many instances, as very intense, like that occasioned by the languors of sickness in its last stage, or the pain arising from dislocated or broken bones, and venting itself in complaints and lamentations, in sighs and tears, Indeed, the prophets exhort us (and, by adopting their expressions into her services, the church directs us actually to assert that we follow their exhortations) to "turn to the Lord "our God," not only "with fasting," but "with "*weeping*." There are temporal calamities which can draw tears plentifully from most persons; nay, a fictitious representation of them, we find, can produce the effect. Spiritual ones, perhaps, would do the same, if we felt them as we ought to feel them; as due retirement and meditation would cause us to feel them; and as we shall one day feel them, when death shall be seen levelling his dart at our pillow, and the throne of judgement rising to the view beyond him. But, as was before observed, the degrees of sorrow, as well as the modes of expressing it, will vary, as belonging more to the sensitive nature than to the

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rational. And for the avoiding all scruple and doubtfulness on this head, it may be laid down for certain, that the least degree of sorrow is sufficient if it produce a reformation, the greatest insufficient if it do not.

A third step in the process of repentance is *confession*. One of an ingenuous mind, who is heartily sorry for his offences, will not be ashamed or backward to own that sorrow. In transactions with a fellow-creature, we cannot hope that a fault will be overlooked which has not been acknowledged, or pardon granted, before it has been asked. "I said, "I will confess my sins unto the Lord; and so thou "forgavest the wickedness of my sin."

A fourth step in the process of repentance is *resolution to amend*. A sorrowful confession of what we have done amiss will of course occasion a wish that it had not been done, a desire to undo it so far as it may be possible, and, above all, a resolution not to do the same again, but to take a course directly the reverse of that which we had before taken; in other words, to alter, to reform, to amend our lives.

One step more remains, and only one, but that very steep and difficult of ascent, which is, to carry what we have resolved into execution. It is this which finishes and crowns all the rest, being indeed the step for the attainment of which all the rest were taken, and which therefore renders them of any value, as it shows the penitent to have been sincere in taking them, to have considered them not as efficacious in themselves, but as means to an end—an end, thus, and thus alone, to be accomplished.

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Such is the *nature* of repentance. It begins with conviction of sin, passes on to sorrow of the heart, confession of the mouth, and resolution of amendment; and it terminates in reformation of life.

II. The *motives* to it come now to be considered.

Evil to be avoided and good to be obtained, are the motives which influence and produce all human actions.

To escape from the rigours and storms of winter, and to enjoy the sweets of a milder and more gracious season, is the instinctive cause why the heaven-taught monitors, to whom we are referred, migrate from one country to another. It is to avoid the judgements of God, and partake of his mercies, that man is called to repent. The parallel is evident—"The "stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, know "the time of their returning"—and the *motive* to their return is comprehended and implied in the *time* of it, which is the spring—"But my people know "not the judgement of the Lord;" they know not, they consider not, that tremendous wintry tempest, from which they ought to fly, in like manner, by repentance, to the all-enlivening, cheering, and comforting spring of unbounded light and love.

The evil, then, to be avoided, is "the judgement "of God," consequent upon sin, and sure to overtake it, if unrepented of. Sin, which is the transgression of the law, cannot but be noticed by Him who gave that law; and if noticed, must be punished, either in this life or that which is to come. No principle can be plainer than this; for otherwise, a law would serve no purpose but that of bringing contempt

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upon the maker of it. There is not an instance, perhaps, upon record of any age or nation, where the idea of punishment has not been connected with that of guilt; and the certainty of such connection is the great substance of all the Scriptures.

Sin is often punished in this life; much oftener than we are aware; indeed so often, that we may say to you as Moses to Israel:—"If ye have sinned "against the Lord, be sure your sin will find you "out[b]." We see how much this is the case in the sacred history, where we are admitted within the veil, and the rationale of the divine proceedings in particular cases is unfolded to us. When we are ignorant of that rationale, as, without special information from above, we must be respecting the course of God's ordinary providence in the world, it is unsafe, and it may be not only uncharitable but unjust, to judge in this manner of the calamities which befall our *neighbour*. But there would be no harm, when calamities befall *ourselves*, if we should take a retrospect of our conduct, and in that conduct endeavour to discover the cause that might have induced our heavenly Father to send them. It will not be saying too much, I believe, to say, that many times, if the search were made with diligence and fidelity, we *should* discover it: at least, were we not able to particularize, we should discover enough in general to satisfy us that, be our sufferings at any time what they may, we do not suffer more than we deserve to suffer; but that each of us, without any tincture of

[b] Numb. xxxii. 23.

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superstition or hypocrisy, may, from heart-felt conviction, exclaim, with the good Psalmist, "I know, O "Lord, that thy judgements are right, and that thou of "very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled." —Every fresh instance of this sort is, indeed, only a fresh confirmation of that grand and most important truth, which should ever be uppermost in our thoughts, that all natural evil is the consequence and punishment of moral. Remove the latter by repentance, and God will remove the former, when he sees that it has performed the work, and produced the effect intended.

It would be in vain, however, to dissemble, that, in the present state, as is the offence, such is not always the punishment. Notoriously profligate sinners often partake not, to appearance, the common evils of life, but pass their days in prosperity, affluence, and health, and die without any visible tokens of the divine displeasure. The fact is indisputable; and it was a stumbling-block, by very good men of the old time not without great difficulty surmounted. The conflict occasioned by it in the human mind is described at large in the seventy-third psalm, and in the twelfth chapter of our prophet Jeremiah; nor will believers fail sometimes to experience a temptation of a similar nature, while the object shall continue to present itself, that is, while the world shall last.

To take off, in some measure, the force of the objection, it must be remarked, that, besides those judgements of God which lie open to the observation of mankind, there are others, even in the present life, of

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a secret and invisible kind, known only to the party by whom they are felt. There is a court constantly sitting within, from whose jurisdiction the criminal can plead no exemption, and from whose presence he cannot fly: there is evidence produced against him which he can neither disprove nor evade; and there a just sentence is not only passed, but forthwith executed upon him, by the infliction of torments severe and poignant as the strokes of whips or scorpions: torments, exquisite in proportion to the sensibility of the part affected; torments, of which he sees the beginning, but is never likely to see the end.

Trust not to appearances. Men are not what they seem. In the brilliant scenes of splendour and magnificence, of luxury and dissipation, surrounded by the companions of his pleasures and the flatterers of his vices, amidst the flashes of wit and merriment, when all wears the face of gaiety and festivity, the profligate often reads his doom, written by the hand whose characters are indelible. Should he turn away his eyes from beholding it, and succeed in the great work during the course of his revels, yet the time will come, when from scenes like these he must retire, and be alone: and then, as Dr. South states the question, in a manner not to be answered, "What is "all that a man can enjoy in this way for a week, a "month, or a year, compared with what he feels for "one hour, when his conscience shall take him aside, "and rate him by himself?"

There is likewise another hour which will come, and that soon—the hour when life must end; when the accumulated wealth of the East and the West,

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with all the assistance it is able to procure, will not be competent to obtain the respite of a moment; when the impenitent sinner will be called—and must obey the call—to leave every thing, and give up his accounts to his Maker, of the manner in which he has spent his time and employed his talents.—Of what is *said* by such at that hour, we know not much. Care is generally taken that we never should. Of what is *thought*, we know nothing.—O merciful God, grant that we never may!

It will still be alleged, perhaps, that instances are not wanting of the worst of men, in principle and practice, going out of life with no less composure than the best. I believe these instances to be very rare indeed. But admit the allegation, that there are some; what do they prove? What can they prove? Why, certainly, unless all that has been conceived and uttered by the wise and good of every age concerning God and religion, right and wrong, virtue and vice, truth and falsehood—unless all this be a mere dream, they can prove only that such persons die in a state of ignorance, stupidity, or judicial blindness, with hardened hearts and seared consciences. When the drunkard ceases to feel in the morning the usual pains and penalties of his last night's debauch, he fancies the strength of his constitution has triumphed over the mischief of intemperance, and that the bitterness of death is past. Alas, poor man! the fact is, that his constitution, by his ill treatment of it, has lost the sense of natural good and evil, implanted in it for its preservation; he has no longer that motive left to reformation, and is therefore seal-

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ed up to perdition, which is coming upon him, fierce, speedy, and irresistible, like an armed man.

But however, by habits either of sensuality or infidelity, the conscience may be drugged and laid asleep in this world, let it not be forgotten, that (whether some men believe so much or not) there is another world beyond this, in which it must awake and sleep no more. And if in this world some sins are punished, as we have assurance they are, while others of far greater magnitude and more atrocious guilt are permitted to go unpunished, it will follow, by a consequence which the wit of man cannot gainsay should he study for a thousand years to do it, that such sins, not being punished *here*, will most inevitably be punished *there*. Else were God unrighteous indeed!—As touching the nature of those after-punishments, I shall only say (the misgivings and forebodings of him who has deserved them will speak the rest), that they are such as will be inflicted, after the expiration of the day of mercy, by inexorable justice and almighty power.

We have taken a view of the evil to be avoided by repentance. It consists in the temporal judgements of God, the terrors of a guilty conscience, and the pains of eternal death.

The good to be obtained needeth only to be mentioned in very few words. It must have offered itself to your thoughts as we passed along, branching into these opposite particulars—

—The light of heaven shining upon our tabernacle, the divine favour attending us and ours through every stage of our existence, sanctifying pro-

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sperity, which by the displeasure of God may be rendered a curse, and turning adversity itself into a blessing, while it becomes an instrument to rectify the disorders of our minds, to soften the few hard places remaining in our hearts, to smooth and lay even the little roughnesses in our tempers; thus gradually and gently preparing us for our departure hence, and fitting us for the company, to which we are going, of "the spirits of just men made perfect."

—The answer of a good conscience, diffusing peace and serenity over all the powers and faculties of the soul, refreshing like the dew falling on the top of Hermon, exhilarating as the fragrance of the holy oil descending from the head of Aaron; sweetening the converse of society and the charities of active life, and affording, in retirement and solitude, pleasures concealed from the world around us, joys in which "a stranger intermeddleth not;" enlivening the morning, brightening the noon, and gilding the evening of our days; effecting what is so difficult to be effected, and what nothing else can effect, at once making life pleasant, and death desirable, as leading to something still superior to all we feel here below.

—The reward in heaven, the glory that shall be revealed, to be known only when it *shall* be revealed; the bliss without alloy and without end, which he cannot conceive who has not experienced, and which he who has experienced can find no human language able to express.

Such evil is to be avoided, and such good to be obtained by repentance, that plank remaining to a shipwrecked world, on which alone we can escape to

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the haven of rest. All have sinned, and therefore, in order to be saved, all must repent. It is surely the least they can do; and to those who do this, through faith in the blood of Christ purifying the conscience from sins past, and the power of the Spirit of Christ supporting and carrying them on for the time to come, exceeding great and precious promises, comprehending and confirming all that has been advanced, are made in every part of Scripture, which before this audience there is no occasion to recite.

III. Some short *rules* shall be laid down for the conduct of our repentance through the several parts of which, under the first head of this discourse, we have shown it to be composed; that so it may be made to answer the character already given of its power and efficacy under the second.

1. *Stifle not convictions.* The world, through all its vicissitudes, natural, political, and moral, the casualties of youth, and the increasing infirmities of age, is full of warnings and admonitions. Day unto day showeth this speech, night unto night uttereth this knowledge. We hear, but resolve to forget. Many of the employments and most of the amusements of life are engaged in, that man may fly from himself and from his own thoughts. Attend to every suggestion of this salutary kind, from what quarter soever it may proceed; attend, and slight it not. It is the voice of God calling you to repentance. Listen and obey.

2. *Be serious.* The subject will cause any man to become so who considers it as he ought to do; who reflects what sin is in the sight of God, what sorrows it occasioned to the Son of God, what destruction it

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hath brought upon the world, and is about to bring upon himself, unless prevented by a timely repentance. Memorable are the words of a great statesman of our own, when, because he seemed pensive and thoughtful towards the close of his days, some court buffoons were sent to divert him: "While we "laugh, all things are serious about us. God is se-"rious, when he preserveth us, and hath patience to-"wards us. Christ was serious, when he died for us. "The Holy Spirit is serious, when he striveth with "us. The Scripture is serious, when it is read before "us. Sacraments are serious, when they are ad-"ministered to us. The whole creation is serious, "in serving God and us. Angels are serious above, "while they wait for our conversion. Evil spirits "are serious below, in endeavouring to effect our "destruction—And shall man not be serious, who "of all other creatures hath most reason to be so?"

3. *Be frequent in confession.* The church enters upon her service with it in public, and every one should do the same in private. If you feel not that warmth of devotion you could wish to feel when you begin, you may experience it before you end your confession. The very repetition of proper sentiments in proper language, will produce the affections which they are intended to express. Begin, as an act of obedience to him who has assured us, that, "if we "confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us "our sins." Such an act of obedience may be rewarded with every thing else that is necessary—"This I had, because I kept thy commandments."

4. *Resolve speedily.* Fruitless is sorrow for having

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done amiss, if it issue not in a resolution to do so no more. And in forming this resolution, no time is to be lost. He who doth not resolve to-day, will be much less disposed to resolve to-morrow. Procrastination in many cases is dangerous: in this it is often fatal.

5. *Renew your resolutions daily.* Else will they be soon forgotten, and consequently never carried into execution. It is the interest of the passions that they should be forgotten. Cares and pleasures will be apt to efface them; temptations will return and prevail; a relapse will be the consequence; and all the work must be entered upon anew, with difficulties increased, strength diminished, and courage appalled. To prevent this from happening, no better method can be devised, than every day to renew the impressions once produced. During so short an interval, the enemy can make no very considerable breach in the works—none but what may be easily repaired, and put again into a state of defence.

But after all—"Except the Lord keep the city, "the watchman waketh but in vain." It is he who granteth repentance unto life; and it is he alone who can perfect the good work, when it is begun in us. To him, therefore, let prayer be made, without ceasing, at morning, and at evening, and at noon day, and that instantly. And when can we, with more propriety or more effect, prefer our petitions, than at this time, that He would be pleased to prosper the word that hath been spoken to the purpose for which it hath been spoken; that they who have not yet begun their repentance may forthwith begin it; and

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that they who have begun it may be enabled happily to complete it; that all may make a due use of the present holy season, which to many may perhaps return no more; and no single person leave this place liable to the reproach of God by his prophet, that, when "the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, know the time of their coming"—he should "not know the judgement of the Lord."

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DISCOURSE XVII.

THE DEVOUT SOLDIER.

ACTS, x. 31.

Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

IN the histories of this world we read of conquests gained by the sword and spear; we view the celebrated heroes of ancient and modern times marking out their progress through kingdoms and empires with havock and desolation, while "every battle" of those warriors "is with confused noise, and garments rolled "in blood." How different the scenes presented to us in that portion of sacred story, styled "The Acts "of the Apostles," or the exploits of those who were sent forth to subdue the world to the obedience of Christ! Here too we read of conquests; but they were gained by faith and patience, by prayers and sermons, by meekness and long-suffering. Here we behold a mighty prince making his progress upon the earth; but that prince is the "Prince of Peace," and his progress is the progress of salvation: he makes war against the unruly passions and affections of sinful men, and all his desire is, to command a willing people in the day of his power.

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Hitherto the apostles, in compliance with their orders, had confined themselves to the Jews, as the Gospel must be first preached to that once highly favoured people. But now the hour was come, when the great mystery of divine mercy, the call of the nations, should begin to be unfolded, and God would show some specimen of the riches of his grace reserved in store for the Heathen world. St. Peter was, therefore, sent with the glad tidings of a Saviour to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, on the circumstances of whose call and conversion, as they are very particularly related in the chapter from whence the text is taken, I shall proceed to offer some considerations, which, it is hoped, may be of use to us all.

"There was a certain man in Cæsarea called "Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the "Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared "God with all his house, which gave much alms to "the people, and prayed to God alway."

From the name and profession of Cornelius, it appears that he was a Roman, and, consequently, a Heathen. But the character here given of him makes it evident that he must have been in some sort a convert to Judaism, and instructed out of the law; otherwise the Holy Ghost would not have called him *a devout man;* he could not be said to have *feared God,* that is, the true God, whom, as a Heathen, he could not know, much less worship and serve by *prayer* and *alms-deeds.* He was therefore one of those who were styled *Proselytes of the gate,* not circumcised and made complete Jews, but taught the general principles of true religion, the knowledge of God

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and a Saviour who was to come; and permitted to attend and offer up their devotions in the outer court of the temple at the times of sacrifice. The Ethiopian nobleman, who came to Jerusalem to worship, and was baptized by Philip, must have been in the same state with Cornelius, and so became prepared, like him, to receive the Gospel, when it was preached to him.

1. God Almighty hath his servants in all places and in all conditions, even those wherein one would least expect to find them. The profession of a soldier is generally thought very unfavourable to religion, however it comes about; for certainly, if there be any one man to whom religion is more necessary at all times than it is to another, a soldier is that man. His life is "always in his hand," always liable to be taken from him; therefore should he not "forget "God's law." Death besets him on every side in its most terrible forms, and threatens, each moment, to call him away to judgement; therefore it behoveth him to stand ready with his accounts prepared. A sect that arose here in England during the last century, held it unlawful to bear arms; but without grounds. For when the soldiers applied to that most rigorous and austere preacher, St. John the Baptist, he did not exhort them to quit their profession, as he would doubtless have done had it been unlawful in itself, but only recommended a proper behaviour to them: "Do violence," says he, "to no man, and be content "with your wages." So that there is no natural or necessary connexion between irreligion and the profession of a soldier. On the contrary, true religion

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never appears to more advantage than it doth in that character. It pleased God to accept a person of the military profession as the first fruits of the Gentile world. And he must be a person of very little sensibility, who is not charmed with the account given us of Cornelius, an officer in the Roman army.

2. "He was a devout man"—not only what the world calls "a decent character, a good sort of a man," by which is often intended a goodness with no religion and very little morality; but a thoroughly pious man, one that "feared God," that set God always before him, and regarded *him* in all he said and did. Such a fear is the first and principal part of divine wisdom, and it is peculiarly excellent in a soldier; because he who fears God as he ought to do, will fear nobody else. True courage must be founded in true religion; for a bad man cannot be a brave man, with his eyes open and his thoughts about him. Nor could a general give a better exhortation to his army, than that given by Christ to his disciples: "Fear not them which kill the body, and, after that, "have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him who, "after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both "body and soul in hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear "him." And a Heathen historian[a], who was himself a great commander, could say, that "the soldier "who first serves God, and then obeys his captain, "may confidently hope to overcome his enemy."

[a] Xenophon.

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3. Cornelius "feared God, with all his house." Piety, like the sun, communicates itself to all around it. Every family is a little kingdom, of which the master is prince; it is a little flock, of which the master is shepherd, appointed by Heaven to govern it in righteousness, and to guide it in the way of peace. Such is the true use of that power which God hath granted unto men, from him that ruleth over millions, to him that hath only a single servant. The manners of a family depend upon those of the master. His principles and practices soon diffuse themselves through the house, and the piety or profaneness, the sobriety or intemperance, the sloth or diligence of servants, discover to the world the nature of that fountain from which they flow. "Cor-"nelius feared God, with all his house." He set a good example, and took care that they should follow it. He honoured the name of God himself, and it was not blasphemed by his domestics. While he was proceeding to heaven, he did not send them, or let them go, to hell, but carried them all with him. He feared God, with *all* his house; there was not one wicked or disorderly person in it. And now, recollect who this man was. He was a soldier; he was a Roman. How will his example, in this respect, be held up at the day of judgement, to the shame and condemnation of Christians who have never once thought of following it!

4. Cornelius "gave much alms to the people, and "prayed to God alway." True religion consisteth in the love of God, and of man for God's sake. The former shows itself in the exercise of piety; the lat-

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ter in that of charity. One leads us to God, as the only person who can supply our wants; the other induceth us to supply those of our neighbours. Prayer is powerful, and alms are powerful; and when they join their forces, omnipotence itself is pleased to be overcome by them. Alms give wings to prayer, causing it to ascend swiftly toward heaven; and prayer gives strength to alms, enabling them to follow after, till they enter the everlasting doors together, and present themselves before the Most High. They rise like vapours from the earth, and return again, like them, with a blessing. But, in order that they may produce this effect, a man must not be niggardly in his alms, he must not be inconstant in his prayers. "Cornelius gave *much* alms to the people, and prayed to God *alway*," that is, at all the stated and proper times of prayer.

5. From the account which Cornelius gives of himself to St. Peter at the latter end of the chapter, it appears that he was accustomed to join *fasting* to prayer. "Four days ago," says he, "I was "*fasting* until this hour." Prayer is an ascent of the soul to God. The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and hinders it in its ascent. The more that body is fed and pampered, the more it clogs and weighs down the soul. Abstinence from food, therefore, has been enjoined by God, and practised by his people, both Jews and Christians, among other ends, for the increase and fartherance of devotion. And experience will soon teach us the wisdom and fitness of such injunction; for there is not more difference between one man and another,

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than there is between the same man and himself when full and when fasting, before his meals and after them. Fumes from the stomach arise into the head; they cloud the understanding, and render the mind dull and heavy; they make a man unfit for the business of this world, much more for that of another. From Cornelius we learn, therefore, what he must have learned from the people of God, that indulgence puts an end to devotion, and abstinence is the best preparative for prayer.

6. Cornelius was praying in his house at the ninth hour of the day, when he saw in a vision evidently an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying, "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are "had in remembrance in the sight of God." The ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, was one of the hours of prayer among the Jews; and the observation of it by Cornelius shows that he must have been instructed in their religion. At this hour it was, that a new and unexpected guest entered his apartment. A spirit from the regions of the blessed came down and visited him. Glorious was his appearance, and his garments were of the colour of the light. "A man in bright clothing," says he, "stood before me." The message which this divine visitant brought, was one full of grace and comfort; cheering and refreshing as the dew of heaven, when it falls upon the grass of the field. "Cornelius, thy "prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in re-"membrance in the sight of God." Such are the blessings which attend the pious and charitable man. "God is not unrighteous, that he should forget his

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"work and labour of love." His good deeds are done upon earth; but, like a cloud of incense from the holy altar, they ascend to heaven, and rise in sweet remembrance before the throne. We do not indeed expect angels from above to assure us of this. We should be unreasonable if we did; for the word of God speaks to our faith, as plainly as the angel did to Cornelius; it cries aloud to every true penitent and sincere believer, "Thy prayer is heard, "and thine alms are had in remembrance in the "sight of God." And he who, like Cornelius, "giveth much alms to the people, and prayeth to "God alway," at the appointed seasons, will find a joy and comfort in so doing which may answer the same purpose with the appearance and message of the angel.

7. But the angel has something more to say to Cornelius—"And now, send men to Joppa, and call for "one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he shall tell "thee what thou oughtest to do." Two questions may here be asked. First, How could Cornelius please God, not having faith in Christ? Secondly, If he pleased God without faith in Christ, what more could he do with it? A short state of the case will afford us a satisfactory answer to both these questions. That Cornelius had faith in the true God, the God of Israel, appears from the manner in which he worshipped, and from the whole conduct of his life. This faith he must have received from the Jews and from their Scriptures. By them, it is more than probable that he had been made acquainted with God's merciful intention of redeeming mankind

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by a Saviour who was to come. Nor is it possible to suppose that he should have lived any time in Judea without having heard the common reports concerning Jesus of Nazareth, his wonderful works, his death, and resurrection. Nay, St. Peter, addressing himself to Cornelius and his friends, says, "The "word which God sent unto the children of Israel, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ, that word, I say, "*ye know*, which was published throughout all "Judea," &c. But whether Jesus were indeed the person foretold, the Messiah in whom he must believe, and on whom he must rely for salvation, of this point Cornelius, like many of the Jews themselves, might be ignorant or doubtful; the Gospel not having been yet preached to him by any of the apostles. He was, therefore, ordered to send for St. Peter, who would inform and convince him of so important a truth. The Gospel was necessary for Cornelius, in the same manner that it was necessary for the whole Jewish church. They believed in the Messiah to come; it was necessary they should acknowledge him when he did come; otherwise their belief would have become unbelief, as unhappily was the case with the greater part of that nation, who were accordingly punished and destroyed as unbelievers. Had Cornelius rejected the Gospel when preached, and opposed Christ when made known to him, he would have been in the same case with them. From that moment, he had commenced an enemy to God, because an enemy to his Son; and therefore God would have been an enemy to him. But far different were his tempers and dispositions, resembling those of the be-

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lieving Jews, who, like old Simeon, only waited for the manifestation of the Saviour, ready to embrace him as soon as he appeared. The talent committed to him he had improved to the utmost; the knowledge obtained had been reduced to practice; and "to him "that hath shall be given." So the angel directed him to the apostle, and the apostle to Christ. The angel did not himself convert and baptize Cornelius; for the dispensation of the Gospel was committed not to angels, but to men; and all things must be done "in order," as God has thought proper to appoint in the church. "Send for Simon, whose "surname is Peter; HE shall tell thee what thou "oughtest to do." An angel may come from heaven, but he will send us to an *apostle* for instruction.

8. An opportunity of being instructed in his duty, of being *told what he ought to do*, was not, in the opinion of Cornelius, to be lost or hazarded. He "made haste, and prolonged not the time." No sooner had the heavenly visitant left him, than "he "called two of his servants, and a devout soldier of "them that waited on him continually;" for such he chose to wait on him, having adopted David's rule, in the establishment of his household—"Mine eyes "shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they "may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect "way shall serve me." To these intelligent and well-disposed domestics he related all that had happened, and despatched them forthwith to Joppa. Happy the master who hath such servants! Happy the servants who have such a master! Happy he

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who sends, and they who are sent, upon such an employment!

9. The admission of the Gentiles into the church of God, to enjoy its privileges, and share its blessings, was a doctrine against which all the passions in the breast of a Jew were armed, notwithstanding the many clear and evident predictions in its favour. The Israelitish church (as churches and sects are but too apt to do) had fondly arrogated to itself an exclusive right to the divine promises, forgetting to reflect, that those promises were not absolute, but conditional; that they were not made to the persons of men, but to their faith; so that when a Jew ceased to believe, he would cease to be an heir of the promises; and when a Gentile began to believe, he would immediately begin to be so. There was a time when no such distinction existed as that of Jew and Gentile, but the descendants of Noah were upon an equal foot of favour and acceptance. The apostasy of the nations to idolatry occasioned the distinction; and therefore an unprejudiced mind must have perceived at once, that their repentance and reformation would, in course, abolish it again. The father only waited the return of the prodigal, to readmit him into his family. In the mean time, the children of Abraham were selected, to preserve the truth, and faith in that truth, because they were the believing children of a believing parent. The light, which otherwise must have been extinguished, was placed in that candlestick; but it was placed there to give light to all who should, at any time, come into the

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house. Never, surely, was there a dispensation more wise or more gracious! But it offended the Jews, as opposing their family and national prejudices, which were not without some difficulty effaced from the minds of the apostles themselves; insomuch that, while the messengers of Cornelius were upon the road, it was judged necessary to prepare St. Peter for their arrival by a figurative and scenical representation, and that thrice repeated, of the great change which was about to take place in the world, by the conversion of the Gentiles, and their adoption into the family of the faithful. For this purpose, while engaged at his devotion, he was cast into a trance—"He saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This vision is evidently formed upon the legal distinction of clean and unclean creatures, which are here made to represent, as probably they were always intended to do, by their different properties and qualities, the corresponding different tempers and dispositions of good and bad men, believers and unbelievers, Jews and Gentiles; so that by the union of clean and unclean in the

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mystical sheet, which contained *all manner* of creatures, was denoted the purification of the Gentiles by faith, who were once unclean, and their junction with the believing Jews in the Christian or universal church. The purport of the vision, thrown into prophetical language, would run thus:—"The *wolf* "shall dwell with the *lamb*, and the *leopard* shall lie "down with the *kid*, and the *calf* and the *young lion* "and the *fatling* together: the *cow* and the *bear* "shall feed, and their young ones shall lie down together; and the *lion* shall eat straw like the *ox*. "And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the "*asp*, and the weaned child put his hand on the "*cockatrice*' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy "in all my holy mountain; for *the earth shall be* "*full of the knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters "cover the sea. In that day there shall be a root of "Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; *to it shall the Gentiles seek*." The arrival of those who were sent from Cornelius, and the injunction of the Spirit, "Arise, and get thee down, and "go with them, nothing doubting, for I have sent "them," fully satisfied Peter, as to the intention of the heavenly vision; and, in his own mind, he readily applied to Jew and Gentile, what he had seen and heard concerning the clean and unclean animals.

10. Cornelius, in the mean time, impatiently waited the return of his faithful messengers; and, with a truly open and liberal spirit, desirous that others should partake of the good which Heaven had sent him, he "had called together his kinsfolk and "near friends," that they likewise might hear the

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word of life: as knowing, it is with the grace of God as with the light of heaven, of which no man has the less because a million of his brethren enjoy it as well as he. There is enough for all the world, and every individual has as much as he is capable of receiving.

11. As Cornelius had been ordered by an angel from heaven to send for Peter, it was natural for him to regard the apostle in the highest light; and therefore, when he had the happiness to behold him entering his doors, "he fell down at his feet, and "worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, "Stand up; for I myself also am a man"—one encompassed with the infirmities of mortality like yourself; a fellow-creature, whose duty it is to join with you in the worship of him to whom alone worship is due. This is one part of St. Peter's conduct, among many, which his pretended successors in the see of Rome have not been solicitous to imitate; or we should never have heard of the style, *Dominus, Deus noster, Papa!*

12. By the opening of St. Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends, it appears, that he understood the vision as we have above explained it. "Ye "know," says he, "how that it is an unlawful thing "for a man that is a Jew, to keep company and "come unto one of another nation: but God hath "showed me," that is, plainly, by the creatures in the sheet, "that I should not call any MAN *common* "*or unclean.*" The creatures, therefore, represented *men;* and to mankind, as divided into Jews and Gentiles, St. Peter transferred the idea suggested by

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the animals distinguished into clean and unclean. He goes on to declare himself at length convinced, "that God is no respecter of persons, but in *every* "nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteous-"ness, is accepted with him;" that is, the partition-wall is broken down, and people of *every nation*, as well as the Jewish, are accepted, upon the same terms of faith and obedience, whenever, by God's grace, they come into them, as Cornelius did, and as the whole Heathen world afterward did, upon the publication of the Gospel. "God is no respecter "of persons;" he does not show favour to the Jews because they were the children of Abraham, if, by rejecting the Gospel, they cease to believe and act like Abraham; which if the Gentiles, by receiving the Gospel, do, they will be accounted children of Abraham and heirs of the promises: "in every nation "he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness," which without faith it is impossible to do—"is ac-"cepted with him."

13. After this introduction, St. Peter proceeds to confirm to his little audience the truth of that word which they had heard concerning Jesus of Nazareth. He declares to them his unction with the Holy Ghost and with power; the works wrought by him for the deliverance of poor mankind from the yoke of the great oppressor; his death, resurrection, and appointment to be the judge of quick and dead; with the consentient testimony of all the prophets to the doctrine of remission of sins through faith in his name. While he preached these interesting and glorious truths, the Holy Ghost fell upon those who

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heard the word, and they were immediately baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

14. In this manner were the first fruits of the Gentiles consecrated to God; and thus was the gate opened, through which hath since passed that "great "multitude, not to be numbered by man, of all na- "tions, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who "stand continually before the throne, and before the "Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in "their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to "our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to "the Lamb!" The same gate is still open, and blessed is he who desireth and striveth to enter in thereat. In order to which, when he hath considered the example of Cornelius, we have only to add— "Go, and do thou likewise."

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DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE FROM THE GUNPOWDER TREASON.

PSALM LXIV. 9.

They shall wisely consider of his doing.

THE Psalm from whence these words are taken, is one of the *proper* Psalms appointed to be used upon this day; and well suited indeed it is to the occasion. A king in danger of being cut off by the secret contrivances of his malignant adversaries, prays to God that his life may be "preserved from fear of the ene-"my;" speaks of the *secret* counsel of the wicked;" of their shooting in *secret*, laying snares *privily*, and "saying, Who shall see them?" But he foretels that the Almighty, who surveys the darkest proceedings of the wicked, shall, in a moment when they least expect it, blast all their designs: "God shall shoot at "them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wound-"ed." He intimates the manner—that their schemes should be discovered and *betrayed* by themselves; "So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon "themselves;" and then follows the effect that should be produced in the hearts of others by so

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awful an event, in the words of the text: "And all "men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; "for they shall wisely consider of his doing:" that is, men shall ascribe such deliverance to the providence of God watching over them; and it will be their wisdom so to consider it as HIS doing, and not the work of man or of human prudence, much less that of what we commonly style *fortune* or *chance*.

It shall be the business of the following discourse to point out,

I. The necessity there is of attention and *consideration*, to discover the hand of God, and the manner of its working, in those events of which we are informed either by history or our own experience—"They "shall *consider* of his doing."

II. The *wisdom* of thus considering—"They shall "*wisely* consider of his doing."

III. Certain marks whereby we may at any time discern an especial providence; applying them, as we pass, to the transactions of this day.

I. Consideration, and indeed no small degree of it, is necessary to discern the hand of God, and the manner of its working, in the affairs of men. Many there are who, for want of this consideration, have no apprehension at all of it, nor are affected with it. They are either too busy or too idle to attend to the history of providence, and the marvellous things which God has wrought and is now working in the world. Of some the prophet says," "The harp and "the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in "their feasts; but they regard not the work of the

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"Lord, nor the operations of his hands:" that is, their minds are so sunk and lost in pleasures and diversions, as never to observe the remarkable occurrences of providence.

Others see what passes, and, like the brute creatures, gaze a while at it, and turn away, making no careful reflection or inquiry into causes and effects. "A brutish man," saith David, "knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this." On one occasion he acknowledgeth himself to have been in this state: "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee."

Others there are, who pretend to consider and inquire freely, but all the wrong way. Instead of discerning and adoring the hand of God, they labour to deny and shut it quite out, ascribing all that happens to human politics, or the working of men only. "How doth God know; and is there knowledge in the Most High? The Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard." Such have been in all ages, and such (the more is the pity!) abound among the historians and *philosophers* (as they call themselves) of our own; who spare no time nor pains in attempting to exclude God from any inspection or influence upon our affairs. Accordingly

Some have been either so perverse, or so profane, that they would not "read providence (as a learned writer well expresses it) in the fairest print." "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up," and that ever so high, in the most stupendous miracles, "they will not see;" such as those of whom it is said in the

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Psalm, "Our fathers understood not thy wonders "in Egypt:" such as those who, when they had seen the earth swallowing up Corah and his company, and the fire from the Lord consuming the men that offered incense, yet presently after charged Moses and Aaron with having "slain the people of "the Lord;" or such as those in the Gospel, who, though Christ "had done so many miracles before "them, yet they believed not."

Wonder not, therefore, after this, if many do not discern the hand of God, when it is not lifted up so high, or extended so far, in miraculous acts; when, as in what we call the ordinary course of things, so many different plans are carrying on, so many instruments are employed; so many and so various ends are to be answered; so intricate must be the complication and entanglement of events, in a series of them reaching from the beginning to the end of the world; and so many of those events cannot be cleared up, and made to appear in their proper and full light, till that end shall come. On all these accounts, the special providence of God is seldom so evident, as that, without great attention and consideration, we can perceive and trace it. It may have been also judged expedient that many occurrences should be puzzling to us, to quash our presumption, to exercise our faith, to quicken our industry, and to find us employment. Our understanding was not given us to be idle upon such occasions, and it is our true wisdom so to use it; which was the

Second point to be proved; "they *wisely* consider "of HIS doing."

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He is not a man of sense who denies either the being or the providence of God; there is no wisdom in atheism; it is "the fool," who "says in his heart, "There is no God." And surely, to imagine that he who made the world should take no care of the world which he hath made, but, as it were, forgetting that he had made it, should deliver it up to chance and fate, is an opinion equally foolish with the other. There are some who well know, that if there be a God, and if he observes and takes cognizance of human affairs, he must one day punish them for their villanies and their blasphemies. Therefore they endeavour to persuade themselves there is neither a providence nor a God. Through the corruptions of their hearts, and being given over to a reprobate mind, they are so unfortunate as to succeed in their endeavours; and by such as they can seduce to a like degree of desperate wickedness, they may be accounted wise men. But he who dwelleth in heaven beholds their devices, and laughs them to scorn. He knows a day is coming, when his vengeance will cause them to feel the truths which no evidence would induce them to believe. The greatest and best persons of all ages have believed in "a God who governed "the world;" and wherein can the wisdom of man consist, but in observing and studying the works and dispensations of that God, from the beginning to this day? For grandeur, pleasure, and advantage, what subject can compare with this? and how senseless is the man who passes his life without attending to them! By his mercies and by his judgements doth our God continually speak to us, and signify his

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mind, and show forth the glories of his kingdom, for which we are evermore bound to praise him. But how can we praise him as we ought, or, indeed, at all, if we know not what those mercies, and those judgements, and those glories are?—"The works of "the Lord are great, sought out"—studied and traced—"by all them that have pleasure therein." "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, they "shall understand the loving kindness of the Lor d "Let him who glorieth glory in this, that he under-"standeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord, "who exercise loving kindness, judgement, and "righteousness in the earth.—A brutish man know-"eth not, neither doth a fool understand.—But whoso "is wise, shall understand these things; prudent, "and he shall know them:" such will know, that "he whose name is Jehovah, is the Most High over "all the world; they will say, Verily there is a re-"ward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God "that judgeth the earth."

Diligently to mark, and carefully to treasure up in our minds, the special providences of the Almighty, is the way to preserve and nourish our faith and hope in him; it furnishes the grounds of our thankfulness and praise; it stirs up our finest feelings and very best affections towards him, holy joy, humble reverence, and hearty love; it supports us under all our sufferings, and affords us comfort in all our sorrows. When adversity presses hard upon a man; when he is stripped of his possessions, and threatened with torture; when enemies persecute, and friends betray or forsake; or when pain and sickness harass

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him upon his bed, and sleep departs from his eyelids—gracious Lord, what shall become of him, if, at such an hour, a writer shall inform him there is no help for him in his God; that there is neither Redeemer nor Creator; that the universe is the sport of contending dæmons, a scene of ravage and desolation; and, instead of being "full of the loving "kindness of the Lord," is peopled only with fiends and furies? What sort of a being must the writer be who could give such a representation of things; and what does he deserve at the hands of mankind? —Before guilt of this infernal dye, that of cheating and thieving, of perjury, robbery, and murder, melts away, and vanishes into nothing.

On the other hand, and by way of contrast, look into that collection of divine hymns, which have been recited in the church, to the unspeakable instruction and consolation of the faithful, from age to age. I mean, as you well know, the book of Psalms. See there how the people of God, whenever any calamity befel them, either as a nation or as individuals, sustained, comforted, and cheered themselves and each other, by recollecting and meditating upon the works of the Lord which he had wrought in old times for their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the children of Israel, his servants; the miracles in Egypt, the wonders in the field of Zoan; the division of the waters at the Red Sea, and again at the river Jordan; the fall of Jericho, the discomfiture of Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, and the overthrow of all the idolatrous kingdoms of Canaan. While they were employed in chanting forth the praises of God for

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the special providences formerly vouchsafed them, their minds were comforted, their spirits were raised, their hearts were warmed, their faith was revived and invigorated; it grew strong and mighty; and they no longer supposed it possible, whatever their present sufferings might be, that he who had so often made bare his holy arm in their cause, could "ever "leave them or forsake them."

The use which they made of the mercies vouchsafed to them in old time, should we make of the special providences vouchsafed to us, in the deliverance and preservation of our own church and nation from the various schemes concerted for the destruction of both. Among the first of these may be justly reckoned the deliverance this day commemorated, as will sufficiently appear, if we consider,

III. The marks and tokens visibly impressed upon it; how *strange* and how *important* it was.

The Scriptures relate many events of a *strange* kind; that is, strange, compared with the ordinary course of things, or the natural influence of causes, when the means are disproportionate, unsuitable, nay, seem even contrary to the effect. Such events speak God to be their cause, by his invisible power supplying apparent defects in the means. In the Scripture histories we are, as it were, admitted behind the scenes, and informed that the hand of God was more immediately concerned. Thus the stars in their courses fought against Sisera: the Lord thundered upon the Philistines, and discomfited them: he made the host of Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and horses, and a great host: he made the children

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of Ammon and Moab to destroy one another: he smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men: under his direction one chases a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight: a stripling, with nothing more than a sling and a pebble, destroys a mighty giant, armed from head to foot: the cunning schemes of worldly and treacherous politicians, such as Abimelech, Ahithophel, and many others, are suddenly baffled and blasted, and the mischief intended falls upon the heads of those who intended it; plots with all possible caution and secrecy, contrived in darkness, are, by improbable means and unaccountable accidents, disclosed and brought to light; "a bird of the "air," as the wise man speaks, "telling the matter;" or, "the stones in the wall," as it is in the prophet, "crying out," Treason! In the book of Esther we read, that the king cannot sleep; to divert him, the chronicle is called for; Mordecai's service is pitched upon, and inquiry made concerning his recompense; honour is decreed him; so the cruel device of Haman to destroy the Jews comes out; and he himself is hanged on the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai.

Thus, in the desperate wickedness of this day, the plot was laid deep and dark; the implements of destruction prepared and all ready, when the heart of one of the conspirators relents towards a friend, who must have been involved in the common ruin: a letter is sent to warn him: in that letter the nature of the destruction is alluded to; the letter is carried to the king, who conjectures the meaning; a search is made, and the villain seized upon the spot; who declared, that

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if he had been advanced a few steps farther, he would have set fire to the train, and sacrificed himself, rather than the design should have failed.

Occurrences like these, containing in them somewhat, though not strictly miraculous, yet truly admirable; turning out of the ordinary stream of human affairs, as miracles surmount the course of nature; most reasonably may, most justly should, be ascribed to the special operation of Him "who only doeth "wondrous things; who breaketh the arm of the "wicked, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty; "who disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so "that their hands cannot perform their enterprise; "who is known by the judgement that he executeth, "when the wicked is snared by the work of his own "hand."

This may be farther evinced from the *importance* of the deliverance.

To entitle every little trifling thing that happens to a special providence, would be levity; to father upon the Almighty the mischiefs issuing from our own sin and folly, would be something worse; but to ascribe every grand and beneficial event to his good hand, has ever been reputed wisdom and justice. It was a prevailing opinion even among the Heathen, that whatever did bring great benefit to mankind, was not effected without divine goodness toward men[a]. We know, indeed, that God doth not disregard any thing, but watches over *all* by his general and ordinary providence. He thereby "clothes the grass of the field;

[a] Balbus, in Cic. *de Naturâ Deorum*, lib. ii.

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"he provideth for the raven his food, and the young "lions seek their meat from him;" without his care "a sparrow does not fall to the ground;" and by it "the hairs of our head are all numbered." But the hand of his more special providence is chiefly employed in managing affairs of moment and consequence to us; such as great counsels and undertakings; revolutions and changes of state; war and peace; victory and good success; the protection of princes, and preservation of his people. When, therefore, any remarkable event, highly conducing to the public good of church and state, doth manifest itself, the accomplishment of it should be attributed to God's own hand. When any pernicious enterprise, levelled against the safety of prince and people, is disappointed and brought to naught, surely it is fit we should profess and say, "The righteous Lord "hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces."

And if the preservation of the king and royal family, with the three estates in parliament assembled[b]; if the freeing our country from civil disorder and confusion of the worst kind, from the yoke of usurpation and slavery, from the most grievous extortion and rapine, from bloody persecutions and trials; if the upholding from utter ruin our church, which was so happily settled, and had so long flourished; if the

[b] Such is the language in the rubrick in the form of service for this day; whence it must occur to the reader, that the doctrine which makes the *king* one of the three estates in parliament, is an *innovation*, introduced by republican writers, who diminish the *crown* to raise *the people*, and in the end to overturn the government.

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securing our profession of God's holy truth and faith, with a pure worship, an edifying administration of his word and sacraments, with a comely, wholesome, and moderate discipline; if being rescued from impious errors, scandalous practices, and superstitious rites, with merciless violence forced upon us; if a continuance of the most desirable comforts and conveniences of our lives; if all these are benefits, then was the deliverance of this day one of the most beneficial and important that ever was granted by Heaven to any nation. And notwithstanding the obscurity or intricacy that may sometimes appear in the course of providence; notwithstanding any general exceptions that may, by perverse incredulity, be alleged against the conduct of things here below; there are marks very observable, and this event is full of them, whereby, if we consider wisely, with due attention, diligence, and impartiality, we may discern and understand that it was "the Lord's doing, "and it was marvellous in our eyes."

For these and all other benefits which have been in old time conferred, and often since preserved and handed down to us of the present generation, let us rejoice, and be glad, and give honour to him who hath so conferred and so preserved them. And let our affections and our lives harmonize with our voices, when we say,

"Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us over "for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped "as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare "is broken, and we are delivered.

"Allelujah! Salvation, and glory, and power unto

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"the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his "judgements.

"Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord "God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou "King of saints.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth "wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name "for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his "glory. Amen and Amen."

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DISCOURSE XIX.

GOD THE PRESERVER OF PRINCES.

PSALM CXLIV. 10.

It is He that giveth salvation unto kings.

IT was a fine eulogium passed at once on the head and heart of the greatest of commanders by the most celebrated of orators, that *injuries* were the only things he was capable of *forgetting*. The generality of mankind are liable, alas! to be reproached with a conduct of a very different nature. They remember most things better than benefits; those, especially, which have been conferred upon them by their heavenly Father and Friend. "Praise the Lord, O my "soul," says David elsewhere, "and forget not all "his benefits." A propensity to forget is evidently implied by this warm and spirited exhortation not to do so. Thoroughly sensible of such a propensity in human nature, the best writers on the practical and devotional part of religion have prescribed the use of a diary, in which the many mercies and deliverances we from time to time experience may be regularly entered; that so, by recurring frequently to such a register, the traces of them, in danger otherwise of being obliterated by the cares and pleasures of life, may be refreshed and renewed in our minds.

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If the case be so bad with individuals in this respect, there is no reason to suppose it better with communities; where, the benefit being shared by so many, each is apt to consider his own portion of it as small, and scarcely worth notice; where that which should be done by every body, is often done by nobody; and where the guilt of ingratitude, like the value of the benefit, by being divided, seems, in the conscience of every single member, to be diminished, and, as it were, brought to nothing. The astonishing instances of *forgetfulness* among the ancient people of God, recorded and reproved for our admonition in the Scriptures of truth, will occur to your minds; and parallel instances among Christians, notwithstanding such admonition, will present themselves to him who is disposed to behold them.

The preceding observations are intended to justify the wisdom of our ancestors, in appointing these annual commemorations of blessings, thus for ever registered in our national diary that they may not be neglected and forgotten. Nor let us by any means grow weary of celebrating them; but, even to the years of many generations, still continue, with thankful hearts, to exclaim—"We have heard with our "ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou "hast done in their days, and in the old time before "them!" For though the mercy be old, the remembrance of it should be for ever young—renewed in our minds, from year to year, and from age to age; while the fathers to the children make known the loving kindness of the Lord, and speak good of his name, by contemplating afresh the doctrine of the day, and

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the fact in which it is exemplified. The former of these is contained in the words of the text, which, when opened and illustrated, will prepare the way for a display of the latter—"I will sing a new song "unto thee, O God; upon a psaltery and an instru-"ment of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee, who "givest salvation unto kings."

It is the high prerogative of the Almighty to give salvation, to preserve and deliver. "I, even I am "the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour." The divine mercy, like the spacious vault of heaven, extends to all, and comprehends within its fostering bosom the whole creation of God. "Thou, Lord, "wilt save both man and beast." But its chief object is man, the lord of this lower world; so that still, comparatively, we may ask with the apostle—"Doth God take care for oxen; or saith he it not "rather for our sakes?" And, for this reason, Job cries out, emphatically, "I have sinned, what shall I "do unto thee, O thou preserver of MEN?"

He who is the preserver of men, above other creatures, is also the preserver of kings, above other men. This point was acknowledged among the Heathen, whose leaders are always represented, by the most ancient of the poets, as acting under the immediate guidance and protection of their respective tutelary deities. But we have a more sure word.—"Great deliverance giveth he to his king; he is the "saving health of his anointed; he is wonderful "among the kings of the earth; he giveth salvation "unto kings."

Let us inquire into the *reasons* why God is pleas-

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ed thus to manifest an especial favour to those who bear rule in the kingdoms of men.

As medicine supposes disease, deliverance must imply danger. From troubles and perils no station is exempt. "Great travail is created for every man, "and an heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam; "from him that sitteth on the throne of glory, unto "him that is humbled in earth and ashes." But this is not all. Great men not only share with others the calamities of life, but their share is in proportion to their greatness. Of what materials are the annals of history composed, but the continual perils and misfortunes of princes? When the storm arises, the loftiest cedars first and chiefly feel its force; and therefore *they* need an extraordinary degree of strength and support. God is mighty to save kings, because there is one mighty to destroy them, and whose interest it is to do so. By government vigorously administered order is maintained in the world; then piety and virtue take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards; then the kingdom of heaven is established, and extends itself upon earth. But when there is "no king in Israel," and each man may do, unpunished, "that which seems right in his own eyes," an entrance is ministered for every thing ungodly and immoral, for every species of violence and of folly; and the empire of Satan prevails. What wonder, then, that *he* should be the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience, exciting tumults and rebellions, delighting in the noise of these waves and the madness of the people, and giving it in charge, like the Syrian of old, to his captains,

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"Fight neither with small nor great, save only "against the king?" And what wonder, again, if this be the case, that God should interpose, to save and deliver those who are thus powerfully and unequally assailed? Verily, he would do it, for this reason alone, since it is his glory to resist the proud, and to put down the mighty from their seats.

But there is another reason. Kings, while employed in the due and faithful execution of their office, have a peculiar claim to his favour and protection, because they are, as the apostle speaks, his ministers, his servants, his delegates and representatives upon earth, attending continually, as such, upon this very thing. And even among men, every superior thinks himself obliged to defend, and vindicate from contempt and insult, those who are acting under him, and by virtue of his commission. Shall not, therefore, the Judge of all the world do right? The honour of the ambassador is the honour of the prince who sends him; and we know who it is that saith, "By ME kings reign." On this account he hath so often made bare his holy arm in the sight of the people, and hath "given salvation unto "kings."

Nor is it for *their* sakes only that salvation is thus given to them. The felicity of a whole nation is involved in that of its governor. The salvation given to the head diffuses itself to the members of the body politic, to the very least and lowest of them. All feel the benefit of government, instituted for the good of all; and no government was ever so badly administered, as not to be a blessing, if compared

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with anarchy which multiplies one tyrant into ten thousand. Society, which implies government, is the natural state of mankind; all are born under it; and it is happy for them that they are so; they could not otherwise be reared from infancy to manhood, or partake in security of any of those blessings now poured in such profusion around us. Willingly or unwillingly, the people must be governed; and, whatever they may fancy to the contrary, by some or other they always were governed, and always will be governed. Their *well*-being, nay, their very *being*, as a people, depends upon it. "Let supplication be made for kings, and for all that are in authority"—Why?—"That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;" that we may be safe from harm, and have leisure to be good, and to do good. The Jews, even when captives in Babylon, were commanded to pray for the prosperity of their oppressor and his city for the same reason, that "in its peace they might have peace." But the connexion between government and felicity is no where marked out in a more expressive and beautiful manner than in the verses of our Psalm immediately following the text. "Rid me, and deliver me," says the Israelitish monarch, "from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood."—Wherefore does the king thus entreat to be delivered? Plainly, on account of the benefits that would be thence derived to the community over which, by God's appointment, he presided—"That our sons may be as plants

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"grown up in their youth; that our daughters may "be as corner stones, polished after the similitude o "a palace; that our garners may be full, affording "all manner of store; that our sheep may bring "forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: "that our oxen may be strong to labour; that there "be no breaking in, or going out; that there be no "complaining in our streets. Happy is that peo- "ple which," by the salvation given to their king, "is in such a case; yea, happy is that people "whose God is the Lord," that can give salvation to him.

Such, then, are the reasons of that especial favour, which divine Providence, in so many instances, hath shown towards the persons of Princes; because of the danger they are continually in from the adversary; because of the relation they bear to him with whose authority they are invested; and because in *their* safety and happiness consists those of the people under them.

And thus much for the doctrine contained in the text. The application to the deliverance this day commemorated will best be made by considering how great the salvation—how evidently the gift of God.

The salvation must be estimated by the destruction intended to have been wrought; and that was great indeed! great beyond any parallel in the annals of mankind! Armies have met, and slaughtered each other in battle; kings have fallen in the field, they have been assassinated, they have been poisoned—one has been tried as a rebel against the *majesty of the people*, and

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executed for *high treason*, before his own palace, by his own subjects! But a design to destroy the whole legislature, king, lords, and commons, at a single blast, and leave not a wreck behind—this certainly was a master-stroke of villany, black as the materials with which it was to have been accomplished, dark as the place where those materials were deposited. Blessed be God, it miscarried!—But who can paint in their proper colours the consequences that must have attended its success? An instantaneous and total dissolution of all government, introductory to such a scene as never was beheld, of broils and disorders, of usurpation and slavery, of extortion and rapine, of faction and fury, of superstition and ignorance, of persecutions, tortures, and massacres;—the whole kingdom a perfect *Aceldama*, a field of blood, for generations to come, without measure, and without end. From all these and other calamities (if others there are), worse than fancy can form or fear itself conceive, was this our country saved by the discovery of the infernal machinations against it.

There is no occasion to particularize the circumstances of this discovery. They have been often recounted, and are well known. And when we reflect upon the unheard-of iniquity of the plot, together with the confusion and misery intended to have been brought on a mighty nation, and happily prevented by such discovery, he must be very blind indeed who does not perceive the finger of God in it, and thoroughly stupid and insensible who does not, on that account, praise and magnify his holy name.

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But there is a circumstance behind, which deserves consideration at all times, and more especially in the present. I mean, the *principle*, the *motive*, which gave birth to this diabolical design. For if you ask, why the governors of three kingdoms were to be thus cut off at one stroke, and dispersed to the four winds; the answer is, they were *heretics*—the church of Rome, in the plenitude of her power and pride, had so denominated them, and judged them not fit to live any longer upon the earth.

That so detestable a scheme should have entered into the heart of man upon any pretence, is disgrace enough to human nature.—But that it should be formed upon the pretence of *religion*—of the *Christian* religion—this is making *sin* to become indeed *exceeding sinful!* From the intended effects of the conspiracy our country was saved by the discovery of it, previously to its execution. But where is the balm to heal the *wounds* which religion has thereby *received, in the house of men* pretending to be its best, nay, its only true *friends?* The efforts of all its adversaries put together, never effected one hundredth part of the mischief caused by the contests and dissensions, the wars and tumults, plots and assassinations, excited and carried on by such friends, under the notion of promoting its welfare and advancement in the world. He who reads the account of such proceedings, feels his indignation rising not only against the men, but against the faith professed by the perpetrators of these enormities; and he is tempted to exclaim, as some have exclaimed—"If "this be Christianity, let my soul rest with the *phi-*

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"*losophers.*" Fully sensible of this, the writers on the side of infidelity spare no pains in ransacking history for facts of this kind, which are continually presented to the reader with every circumstance of aggravation, either in the form of virulent invective, or the more dangerous one of sly and pointed irony, a method practised but too successfully by a late celebrated wit on the Continent, and in the prosecution of which the *historian of the Roman empire*, among ourselves, has condescended, alas, (the more is the pity!) to play a second part to him.

To those who may be in danger of seduction by this very fallacious, though, at first sight, specious argument, we have a few things to offer; and this is the proper opportunity for offering them.

In the first place, then, we must earnestly exhort them, as they love the truth and their own eternal salvation, to make the just and necessary distinction between the religion, and the persons professing that religion. Does the Gospel teach any lessons of the kind we have been considering? Does it direct subjects to blow up their governors into the air, because of some supposed errors in their religious opinions? Certainly not. If those disciples were reproved, as strangers to its spirit, who desired to revenge an indignity shown to the person of their Saviour, by fetching down fire from above; as little can disciples now be justified by it, in seeking, on any pretence, to stir up fire from beneath. Was Christianity at first propagated, or did it direct itself ever after to be propagated, by *doing violence to any man?* You know the contrary; you know, that all its precepts

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point quite another way. There is no need to weary you with citations; a moment's reflection is sufficient to convince and satisfy any person on this head. Let not Christianity, therefore, suffer in your opinion, through the vices and villanies of those who disgrace it; but endeavour, yourselves, to adorn it in all things; and be *astonished*, if you please, as an honest Heathen historian professes himself to have been, that *wickedness* and *cruelty* should mark the actions of men, whose religion throughout inculcates only *righteousness* and *mercy*.

To lessen, however, in some measure, this astonishment, suffer us to remind you, in the second place, that nothing, after all, is more common, than for a good thing to be abused by bad men; and then the better the thing abused, the worse and the more abominable is the abuse of it. When Christianity, by the favour of the converted emperors, opened the way to wealth and power, it is natural to suppose, that sometimes men would embrace it, not for any affection borne to itself, but as the means of acquiring wealth and power; which, when so acquired, would be often misemployed, and religion become the object of those evil passions, which it should—and, if properly received, would—have mortified and subdued. This is human nature—these are the *offences* which, in the present state of a fallen world, *must needs come*—there is no preventing them. But let us not argue from abuse against use. Let us scour off the rust, but preserve the metal. Religion came pure from the hands of God, but was

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adulterated in passing through those of men. To God, therefore, be the glory, to man the shame.

Lastly, and above all—When you find yourselves disposed to listen to the voice of the seducer, and to think unfavourably of Christianity on account of the ill lives and base actions of those who profess it, or, indeed, on any other account, always be upon your guard, and suspect yourselves: examine diligently whether, through the corruption of your own hearts and lives, you do not *seek occasion* against religion, and wish to escape from the holiness of its precepts, the rigour of its discipline, and the terror of its judgements, by denying its authenticity. We often see men so ready to reject the strongest reasons for it, and take up with the weakest against it, that it seems difficult to account for their conduct on any other principle.

This may suffice for the argument formed by unbelievers to the disadvantage of the Gospel, upon the transaction of the day, and others of a similar nature.

Respecting those of the Romish persuasion, something must be said. But it shall be said, not in the spirit of animosity and invective, but in that of Christian charity. We envy them not the indulgence they have lately experienced, and which they would probably have experienced sooner, had government deemed it consistent with the welfare and safety of the state. It is to be hoped, they have at length perceived their error, in endeavouring to propagate religion by sanguinary methods; and to win prose-

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lytes by fire and sword, by racks and gibbets. Were the union ever so desirable, the proposed method of effecting it would spoil all: it can make no man affect the church that adopts it; it tends, on the contrary, to inspire into him an aversion from all that is called *Christianity;* and has given great occasion, as we have seen, to the enemies of the Lord, to blaspheme. There is no natural connexion between the Gospel of peace, and the sword or the bayonet. A saying, indeed, of a zealot in former times has been reported, that "unarmed mission-"aries make few converts." Yet were the apostles of our ever-blessed Redeemer such missionaries, and they converted the world, at a time when the wit and the wisdom, the fashion and the power of it, were all in arms against them. To be converted to any opinion or system, a man must be first well persuaded of the truth of such opinion or system. But *gunpowder* is no instrument of persuasion. The tongue and the pen are intended for that purpose; and even by these the purpose is always most successfully effected when they are employed with gentleness. Man, as has been well observed, like every other animal, is best tamed and managed by good usage; he does not love to be bullied and beaten into truth itself. If you are in possession of it, state it with every possible advantage. Let her appear in her native charms, that the world may admire and adore: let humility and meekness, faith and patience, attend upon her; and in her mouth be evermore the law of kindness. When your writings

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shall be thus new modelled, let your lives and actions be in perfect unison with them; let your behaviour engage the beholder to a consideration of your doctrine, and your doctrine reflect lustre on your behaviour. Then may we hope you will reform what in very deed ought long since to have been reformed in your communion, and render it such as we can conscientiously accede to; such as becomes the simplicity and purity of the Gospel of Christ our Saviour. Or if this cannot be, we may at least live upon a foot of peace and security together (Judah no more troubling Ephraim, and Ephraim no more vexing Judah), without apprehension of plots, anathemas, and crusades. Indeed, *their* day seems to be pretty well over, since we have lived to see the sovereign Pontiff, instead of launching the thunderbolts of the Vatican at the devoted head of a reforming emperor, taking a long and painful journey to supplicate, and returning as he came—a spectacle entirely new! When a disposition appears in the rulers of any kingdom to abolish absurd and superstitious usages, the court of Rome has nothing now left for it, but with all possible expedition to issue an edict, most graciously empowering them so to do. Thus are the mighty fallen!—And still lower must they fall: for the day seems evidently approaching, when "the kings of the earth," as they are styled, or the princes of the Romish communion, shall, by some mighty effort, emancipate themselves from the bondage in which they are holden, and destroy the power which they have so long contributed

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to support: unless that power will ingenuously purify itself from its corruptions, and begin a new æra of primitive Christianity.

The church of Rome should have done this honestly and effectually, when its corruptions were first pointed out. It had then retained those branches, which, in default of such conduct, were broken off. Nor can there be—indeed there ought not to be—any other method devised or thought of, to graft them in again.

When a church really stands in need of reformation, it should always, in *prudence* as well as duty, reform *itself*, to prevent the task from being undertaken by others, who, though they may entertain a very laudable *abhorrence of idols*, may not, perhaps, scruple, if a tempting opportunity should offer, to *commit sacrilege:* who, under cover of reforming abuses, may at length reform away Christianity itself; and, either through ignorance or malice, may "root up the wheat with the tares."

As to ourselves—We celebrate on this day a twofold deliverance from the tyranny of Rome, vouchsafed at different and distant periods. Let us not give occasion to our adversaries in that quarter to say, as they sometimes have had the effrontery to say, that Protestantism naturally leads the way to Socinianism and Materialism, and, in short, to every thing that is opprobrious. Let us not be forward to believe, what some are so very forward to tell us, that the doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, of the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, and that "full, "perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and sa-

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"tisfaction, by him made for the sins of men," proceeded from the *papal chair*, and constitute a part of *the grand apostasy*. In one word, let our studies and our writings, our lives and our conversation, join in making a plain and unequivocal declaration to the whole world that, though we cease to be *papists*, we continue to be Christians.

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DISCOURSE XX.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE MIND BY TROUBLES AND TRIALS.

JOB, XXIII. 10.

When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

THE afflictions of life, though often grievous enough in themselves, become much more so by that state of doubt and perplexity into which the mind of the sufferer is brought by them. He is at a loss to conceive why so much wretchedness is his portion, and what the design of Providence can be in sending it. He is tempted to despair, as thinking God has forsaken him; or to impiety, as imagining there can be no God who governs the world in wisdom and righteousness.

Whenever we find ourselves led to such conclusions as these, we may be sure there is some error in the principles upon which we set out. We are in the dark with regard to some point, the knowledge of which would bring all right, and restore peace and comfort to our fluttering and disordered spirits.

In the case before us, a wrong notion of human life is at the bottom of those desponding and murmuring thoughts which arise in our hearts, on find-

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ing ourselves encompassed and oppressed by a larger share than ordinary of its cares and troubles. We look not forward, as we ought to do; we confine our views to the state of things in this present world; we regard it as final, and then wonder why our condition should be worse than that of our neighbours, when we think ourselves much better than they, and perhaps we really are so.

When the matter is thus stated, difficulties will certainly thicken upon us apace; and, indeed, I know not how we shall ever be able to see our way through them. But let us only reflect for a moment, that this life is no more than a preparation for another; that we come into it in a fallen and corrupted nature; that we are to be purified, during our short continuance in it, to qualify us for perfect happiness and endless glory in the presence of God; that such purification must be effected by trials and temptations; and that trials and temptations necessarily suppose troubles and afflictions, without which they cannot be made—let but these few plain considerations take place in the mind, and, at the brightness before them, clouds and darkness shall disperse, doubts and difficulties shall vanish away; and the poor desponding sufferer, who was lately accustomed, like the possessed man in the Gospel, to wander wild among the tombs, his imagination haunted with thoughts of death and desolation, may now be seen in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and listening to words like these: "My son, despise "not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint

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"when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the "Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every "son whom he receiveth. Blessed is the man that "endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall "receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath "promised to them that love him."

I need not take up your time in proving at large, that this life is a state of trial. It appears sufficiently from the nature of man; from the declarations of God; from the history of his people in every age; and, above all, from the life and death of our Saviour Christ. We are all fully persuaded of this most important truth; but it may be of use to show how this persuasion, if reduced to practice, may become a source of patience and consolation, enabling us to support, with dignity and ease, the several inconveniences and tribulations which are permitted to befall us here below.

In general, we sink under temptation, because we do not sufficiently accustom ourselves to expect, and are, therefore, unprepared to encounter it. But were this idea (which is undoubtedly the true idea of our state) firmly impressed upon our minds, and always ready at hand, we should then stand armed for the fight, and by divine assistance be enabled to overcome. In this war, as in others, the great point is, to guard against a surprise; and to take care, that whenever the enemy shall attack, he may find us ready to repel.

Of the temptations or trials to which we are subject, some proceed from without, and others from within.

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The world endeavours, at one time to seduce, at another to terrify us from the performance of our duty.

In the arts of seduction it is skilful. Whatever may be a man's turn or temper, there are objects fitted to lay hold of it. There is honour for the ambitious, wealth for the selfish, and pleasure for the gay. Unsuspicious of mischief, we are apt to close with proposals of this kind immediately, without considering the terms on which they are offered, or the consequences which may follow. Not so the Son of God, our great pattern and example. In the day of his temptation, "the kingdoms of the world," with their glories and their delights, were set before him. But he knew that it *was* the day of temptation, the hour of trial, on which all depended; he weighed the condition annexed, "If thou wilt worship me, all "shall be thine;" he called to mind what was written, and discomfited the tempter at once: "Get thee "behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt "worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt "thou serve." Thus, of old time, to the mind of the patriarch Joseph, when beset by a formidable temptation, the proper thought occurred:—"How "can I do this great wickedness, and sin against "God?" And the offers of the king of Moab to Balaam, were, at first, rejected, with this noble declaration: "If Balak would give me his house full "of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of "the Lord my God, to do less or more." Balaam found his integrity put to the test, and the question was, whether he should serve God or Mammon.

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When the world cannot seduce, it will persecute. The example of him who standeth, is a reproof to those who are fallen, and who are determined to rise no more. So saying, or so doing, thou reproachest us; and that we will not bear: say as we say, and do as we do, or expect our utmost vengeance; we will sell you to the Ishmaelites, or deliver you up to the Romans.

In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, some persons are mentioned of this decided inflexible disposition, "who through faith wrought "righteousness," and never could be prevailed upon to change either their principles, or their practices. And now behold their situation—"They had trial of "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of "bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, "they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were "slain with the sword: they wandered about in "sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflict-"ed, tormented. They wandered in deserts and in "mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."—Poor, miserable, foolish creatures, below contempt! would the men of fashion perhaps exclaim. But what says the apostle, in the most wonderful parenthesis that ever was penned—"Of whom the world "was not WORTHY."

When the first Christians, in compliance with the strict injunctions of their God and Saviour, refused to defile themselves with the equally senseless and impious idolatry of their heathen neighbours, and all the other abominations which composed its train, the alternative was, to expire in the most horrid tortures

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that evil men, instigated by evil spirits, could devise for the purpose. This was *their* day of trial; and, fiery as it was, they "sustained the burthen and "heat of it," without complaining. The cross, as they well knew, led to a crown: they took it up, and "bore it after Jesus."

Our trials (for ever blessed be God!) are not so severe; but, still, trials we have. If any man form a resolution, steadily, through life, to profess the doctrines and practise the duties of his religion, let not that man imagine, because the *world* is now called *Christian*, that he shall experience no opposition from it. They whose minds and affections are wholly given up to ambition, avarice, intemperance, and impurity, whatever they may style themselves or be styled by others, are idolaters; they do, in effect, still worship the deities of ancient Greece and Rome; and from them the true disciples of Christ will still suffer persecution; will be loaded with opprobrious names; will be driven from society, as not caring to run to the same excess of riot and libertinism; and will be prevented from making their way, as they might otherwise fairly and honourably do, in life. It is said to be almost impossible, at this time, for a young man of rank to succeed, unless he first enter his name, and commence a member of certain societies instituted for the purpose of *gaming*. At this shrine he may sacrifice his time, his rest, his estate, his temper, his conscience, the peace of his mind, and the health of his body. Costly oblations, and bitter pangs! It may be questioned, whether the sufferings of a primitive martyr would not constitute the more eligible lot of

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the two. The agonies could not be more acute, and they would be sooner over.

There is another source of trouble and uneasiness from without, though of a less important kind. It is that produced by the cross tempers, untoward dispositions, and other failings of those about us. These we sometimes, in a peevish hour, think to be more than human nature can bear. But the truth is, that our own tempers are not yet what they should be, and what these trials are intended to make them. It is forgotten that we ourselves have ill humours, and we are offended if our friends do not readily excuse and forgive them; yet we cannot excuse and forgive those of others. This is unreasonable and unjust; it is an inequality and roughness which time and experience, by God's grace, must level and smooth; and we have reason to be thankful, if we are placed in a situation which may contribute to effect so good and necessary a work. The fine observation made by a great critic upon the behaviour of our first parents after their transgression, as described by Milton, well deserves to be remembered by us all: "Discord begins in mutual frailty, and "ought to cease in mutual forbearance[a]."

Thus much for the trials brought upon us by the world from without. There are others which have their origin from within, from the frame and constitution either of body or mind.

To have all relish for the pleasures of life taken from us at once; to be cast on the bed of sickness,

[a] Johnson's Life of Milton, p. 164, edit. Hawkins.

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and to be there confined for days, weeks, months—perhaps for years; this is a trial which, at a distance, wears a most tremendous aspect; and would cause the heart of the stoutest man to sink, who, in the midst of health and vigour, should receive undoubted intelligence that it was soon to be his portion. But let not any person alarm and terrify himself with thoughts of this kind; for, besides that it is folly to anticipate evil, and suffer before the time; He who sends trials, sends strength to support his servants under them. It is wonderful to see how soon the temper is altered and conforms itself to its situation; how the mighty are bowed down, and the haughty are humbled; with what meekness and patience a long series of weakness and pain is borne, till the sufferer "comes forth as gold," a vessel purified and polished, and every way fitted "for the master's "use," with this inscription upon it, "It is good for "me that I have been afflicted."

Another temptation is that from melancholy, or dejection of spirits, as we commonly style it; when the spirit, which sustains a man's other infirmities, is broken, and needeth itself to be sustained; when favourite studies and pursuits please no longer; when the whole creation seems changed, and appears—we know not why—dull and dreary; when the mind is ready to give up every thing, and sink into listlessness and despondency. He who finds himself in this situation, has no time to lose. When a skilful physician has been consulted, that it may be known how far the body is concerned, the mind is to be roused and goaded into action. Constant em-

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ployment must be found for it, lest its powers be turned inward, to fret, and wear, and prey upon itself. In the use of these means, let prayer be continually offered to Him who can bring light out of darkness, and make the sorrowful heart to sing for joy; with patience and resignation let the sufferer trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.

The time would fail me to enumerate all the different temptations which arise in our minds. They are as many, and as various, as our different passions and propensities, each of which will, at times, strive for the mastery, and all of which are to be kept, with a strong and steady hand, in due subordination and obedience.

The subject shall be left upon your minds with the following admonition of a pious French writer—

Include yourself within the compass of your own heart. If it be not large, it is deep; and you will there find exercise enough. You will never be able to sound it; it cannot be known but by him who tries the thoughts and the reins. But dive into the subject as deep as you can. Examine yourself; and the knowledge of that which passes there will be of more use to you than the knowledge of all that passes in the world. Concern not yourself with the wars and quarrels of public or private persons. Take cognizance of those contests which are between the flesh and the spirit; betwixt the law of the members and that of the understanding. Appease those differences. Teach the flesh to be in subjection. Replace reason on her throne, and give her piety for her counsellor. Tame your passions, and bring them under bondage. Put

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your little state in good order; govern wisely and holily that numerous people contained in your small dominions; that multitude of thoughts, opinions, and affections, which are in your heart, till all rebellion be subdued, and the kingdom of heaven established within you[b].

[b] Jurieu's Method of Christian Devotion, Part III. chap. iii.

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DISCOURSE XXI.

THE HOLY GHOST A COMFORTER.

JOHN, XIV. 16.

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

THE words present to us in a little compass, what it is the design of the Scripture to describe at large; namely, the sacred *Three* united in the work of man's redemption. Here is the Son interceding, the Father granting, and the Spirit coming, as upon this day, to form the church, and ever after to preserve and sanctify it: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give "you another Comforter, that he may abide with "you for ever."

It is impossible to cast the subject into a better method, than that offered by the words themselves, as they stand in the text. They direct us to consider,

I. The prayer of Christ: "I will pray the Father."

When we read of the Son praying, we may be induced to think that the person praying must necessarily be inferior to the person to whom the prayer is made. We shall reason, as the apostle elsewhere does, "Without all doubt the greater is entreated "by the less." It is God who is entreated; it is a

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man who entreats; "there is one God, and one me-"diator between God and man," who is a man. He is so; but it is "the man Christ Jesus;" it is a man very differently circumstanced from all men that ever were born, and far above them all: it is a man to whom God was pleased to be united; God was in Christ; in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; God manifest in the flesh, the divine WORD made flesh, and dwelling among us; as, to prefigure this great event in old time, Jehovah came down from heaven, and filled the holy temple built for his reception. "Destroy this temple," says Christ, speaking of his body, "and I" (as God—for God only could do so) "will raise it again in three "days."

The truth is, they who differ from us and oppose us upon this great point, affirm Christ to be man, which we never deny; but they cannot, while allowing the Scripture, disprove his being likewise God, which is what we affirm. "God and man are one "Christ," as our church teaches us rightly to confess.

While therefore it is a man who mediates, intercedes, and prays, it is this circumstance of his being a man in whom God dwells, and to whom God is in an especial manner united, which gives to his mediation, his intercession, his prayer, that virtue and effect, that force and power, which otherwise they could not have; for what, I beseech you, is the prayer of a man, a mere man, however upright and pure, that it should prevail for the pardon of all other men being sinners, and obtain for them from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit?—And for this reason it is, that

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they who deny the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, have been forced to deny also that of his priesthood and intercession.

If we look forward to the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, ver. 26. we find the same person who says, in the words of the text, "I will pray the "Father, and he shall send a Comforter"—we find him uttering these words—"The Comforter whom "*I will send* from the Father." He therefore who, in one capacity, prays that the Comforter may be sent, in another is the person who sends him, being joined in authority and power with the Father: "He "and the Father are one." Many are the passages of this kind, which can be explained and reconciled on no other principle but that adopted and maintained by the church, concerning the twofold nature of Christ. The Spirit is called, in some places, "the Spirit of "the Father[a];" in others, "the Spirit of the Son[b];" he proceeded from both.

How pleasing, how comfortable a consideration is it, that we have an Intercessor on high; through whose prayer to the Father, not only the good things of this world, redeemed from the curse by him who first created them, and made again salutary and holy, are granted to us anew; but we receive also the great, the supreme, the unspeakable gift, the gift of the divine Spirit, one with the Father and the Son, blessed and glorified for ever more!

II. From the Son praying, let us therefore turn our thoughts to the Father granting: "I will pray the

[a] Mat. x. 20. [b] Gal. iv. 6.

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"Father, and he shall give you."—When a son asks, a father can give: the one is gracious to prevail, the other easy to be entreated. The request was not preferred in a cold and languid manner. "He made "supplication," as the apostle speaks, "with strong "crying and tears." And still louder was the voice of his blood from the earth, "speaking better things "than that of Abel;" the one crying for mercy, as the other did for vengeance.

III. The gift thus requested and obtained was that of a Comforter: "I will pray the Father, and he "shall give you a Comforter."

With respect to the apostles, this was a gift eminently in season. Various, as we know, are the powers and favours of the Spirit, suited to the various wants of mankind. To those who are ignorant, he is the Spirit of knowledge; to those who are perplexed with doubts and difficulties, he is the Spirit of truth; to those polluted by sin, he is the Spirit of holiness. But the apostles, at the time when our Lord spoke these words, were in a state of melancholy: sorrow had filled their hearts; comfort was that of which they stood in need: comfort was promised; and, as upon this day, a Comforter was sent. Grief chills the heart, and congeals the spirits: he descended therefore in fire, to warm and expand: he descended in the form of *tongues*, bringing the word of consolation, that good word, which maketh glad the heart of man. The effect appeared accordingly; for in such a manner was the sorrow of the apostles turned into joy, that when they preached the Gospel to the people assembled from different

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countries, their adversaries said, "These men are "full of new wine." But it was not the juice of the grape; in that age, and in that country, none being accustomed, as St. Peter observed, to drink wine in the morning. "These men are not drunken, as ye "suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," or nine o'clock, for they began their reckoning from six. It was therefore wine (to use our Lord's expression) which they had "drunk new in the kingdom "of God;" they were filled with the Holy Ghost, with spiritual comfort, spiritual joy and exultation. Instead of fearing and flying from their enemies, as before, at the apprehension and crucifixion of their Master, they now boldly faced them, prepared to stand before rulers, to "speak of God's testimonies "even before kings, without being ashamed." They were no longer grieved or offended at the thought of suffering for the truth; they rejoiced in tribulation of that sort, and conceived themselves to have acquired a new dignity, when "counted *worthy* so to suffer." Such was the mighty change wrought in their minds, through the power of "the Holy Ghost, the Com-"forter."

A change is wrought in the minds of Christians, through every age, by the power of the same divine Spirit.

On the ministers of the Gospel he does not indeed confer, immediately and by miracle, the gift of divers languages; but it is he who inclines them to learn languages, for the purpose of understanding the Scriptures; to apply themselves carefully and conscientiously to the duties and studies of their profession;

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to preach with force and effect that word which is in the hearts of men as fire, enlightening the dark, warming the cold, melting the hard, and purifying the defiled. It is he who "gives them the tongue of the "learned," who both disposes and enables them "to "speak a word in season to him that is weary" and stands in need of consolation, till, "in the midst of "the sorrows that are in his heart, heavenly comforts "refresh his soul." Our commission is the same with that of our blessed Master, which he opened at Nazareth, in the words of Isaiah—"The Spirit of the "Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath "anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; "he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening "of the prison to those that are bound; to proclaim "the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that "mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, "to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy "for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit "of heaviness, that they might be called trees of "righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he "might be glorified."

What a variety of sublime and beautiful expressions is here employed to show, that our Gospel, as it proceeds from the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is and must ever be a Gospel of comfort!

But to whom is it such? To many it is not; they find no comfort in it; they hate and dread the sight or thought of it. It is such only to the poor in spirit, to the meek, and to the mourners; to those who have been made sensible of their fallen estate, and

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of the sins they have committed; to those who by true repentance have cast out and put away their sins from them; to these it is a cordial indeed: but a cordial can be of no service, it will be of much disservice if administered (should any unskilfully administer it) when the habit is loaded with humours, and the stomach overwhelmed and oppressed by crudities. A cordial here is not the remedy immediately wanted: proper discipline must prepare the way for it.

The Spirit comforts by *strengthening*, as the word, in our language, intimates. He is the Spirit of power, might, and courage, which are conferred upon us, in our due degree and measure, as they were upon the apostles. When convinced of the truth, we are no longer afraid to confess, to defend, or to practise it, before men, even the greatest men. We are not ashamed of being singular at any time in doing our duty, nor offended and grieved because we cannot have the approbation of those whose approbation is not worth having; since of what consequence to a wise man is the opinion of such as he thinks and knows to be, in this particular matter, not wise? *Tongues* were given to be employed in speech; and they should be employed (by the ministers of Christ more especially) with all freedom and boldness, in telling the people of their sins, calling them to repentance, and proclaiming to all the Gospel of pardon and peace.

Such is the gift prayed for by the Son, and bestowed on the church by the Father: "I will pray the "Father, and he shall give you a Comforter."

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IV. He is styled in the text, "*another* Comforter." While Christ continued to be present in person with his disciples, *he* was their Comforter. But, as he had informed them, he was about to leave them, to ascend into that glory from whence he descended, "the glory he had with the Father before the world "was;" the church therefore would find herself in a melancholy, forlorn, and widowed state. "How "can the children of the bridechamber fast" (or mourn), said he, "while the bridegroom is with them? "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall "be taken away from them; and then shall they "mourn in those days." The days immediately following Christ's ascension, were to be days of darkness and sorrow, of great tribulation, and severe persecution, first from Jews, and then from Gentiles. The disciples must have sunk under a trial like this, the church must have failed in its very beginning, and the Gospel have perished from among men, had it not been for the promise and the grant of another Comforter, or *Advocate*, as the word also signifies.

It was expedient that Christ should go away; that he should go into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, and to be our advocate *there*, to answer the slanders and calumnies of the great accuser of the brethren, who accused them before the throne; that he should not only do this, but rescue and save us even when the accusation was true. "There is "one that accuseth you," said Christ, "even Moses." The law accuses and condemns us all, because we all have broken it, and are become guilty before God as a lawgiver and a judge. But what saith mercy

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by the Gospel? "Deliver the man; I have found a "ransom." Christ was first our priest; he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; and then went, with his own blood, into the holy places, to make atonement for those, as sinners, whose innocence otherwise, as advocate, he could not defend. On this foot he went to reinstate us in the favour of God; to take possession of heaven for us, as our surety and representative, "the first-born among many brethren;" to prepare a place for us against that great and joyful day, when he shall return in like manner as he went, to receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.

In the mean time, while this was doing above, there was need of another Advocate, or Comforter below; and he supplied the absence of his body by the presence of his Spirit; so that in all our troubles, under every possible calamity that can befall us, there is help at hand, both in heaven and on earth; in heaven, Christ mediating; on earth, the Spirit comforting. Of this latter it is said, that he also "maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered," praying with us and in us, "bearing witness with our "spirit, that we are the children of God," adopted sons, redeemed from the world, and evidenced to be so, by the testimony of a conscience purged from sin, through faith and the spirit of holiness. "My conscience," says the apostle, "beareth me witness in "the Holy Ghost;"—an expression which answers exactly to that other, "the Spirit witnesseth with "our spirit, that we are the children of God."

We come now to the last clause in my text; "I

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"will pray the Father, and he shall give you another "Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

We may consider this as spoken by Christ of the Holy Spirit, in contradistinction to himself. I go away, but he shall abide. The enjoyment of good, when obtained, may be, and generally is, damped and diminished by the apprehension of losing it again. The disciples found that their blessed Master was about to be taken from them. They might fear the same respecting this other Comforter who was promised, lest he too should, after a while, forsake them. But this was not to happen. The Son vouchsafed to descend from heaven for a certain purpose, and for a certain time necessary to accomplish that purpose: then he returned back to his celestial mansion. Though the disciples had known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth they were to know him so no more. The office graciously sustained by the Spirit, in the scheme of man's redemption, requires his constant abode and superintendence. Of the perpetuity of his influence we are therefore assured, "to our great and endless "comfort."

And herein it is, that heavenly comforts differ from earthly ones. These may be used for a time; but they perish with the using, and we must look for others. Riches make themselves wings; of a still more uncertain tenure are fame and honour; and pleasures are more fleeting than either. They flutter about us, for a little while, in the season of health and prosperity. But the day of sickness and trouble must come; and then, where are they, or what can they avail? Between us and the world the curtain will

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be soon drawn for ever; the things of the world can be of no farther concern or service. To the mind's eye will appear, above, the Judge in glory; below, the earth in flames. Pain will distract, conscience will accuse, and friends will forsake. The man of the world, looking round on those perishing idols whom he has worshipped, and to whom he has sacrificed his eternal interests, will exclaim in the anguish of despair—may no person here present ever know it but by description!—"Surely, miserable comforters "are ye all!"

In such comforts, therefore, put not your trust, for they will undoubtedly fail you in time of need. They are winter-brooks, overflowing when there is least occasion; but in the burning heat of summer, the thirsty traveller, who has recourse to them for the relief of his necessity, finds them dry. Nay, when they are with you in their highest perfection, their insufficiency is ever experienced, though it may not be owned. No circle of pleasure is so complete, as not to leave a frightful void, to supply which, something of a far different and superior kind is required. This has been repeatedly, and in sorrow of heart, complained of by persons possessing all that the world could give them, and finding nothing more of that sort to ask or desire; yet has their existence become so wretched that many of them have been tempted, and some prevailed upon, so far as lay in their power, to put a period to it; confessing themselves weary of treading the round of dissipation and insignificance, and willing rather to risk the torments of another world,

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than sustain the miseries of this, with all its enjoyments full blown before them.

Seek, then, for comforts which never fatigue or cloy; for comforts which, like the manna bestowed on the church in the wilderness, come down from heaven fresh every morning as they are wanted, suited to every taste, and satisfying every capacity. Seek for comforts which abide for ever, attending you through sickness, pain, age, and death, to that land of promise, where the manna ceases to descend only because you are admitted to the presence of Him from whom it descended, and the streams become needless when you can drink at the fountain.

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DISCOURSE XXII.

GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.

PROVERBS, IV. 23.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

THE heart in the body is the well-spring of life. From thence the blood proceeds, and thither it returns. Purge the fountain, therefore, and the streams will flow pure.

When we treat of the mind, we use the same word, to denote that centre and source from which all our thoughts issue, as when we say, a man has a *good heart*, or a *bad heart*. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh, and the hand acteth. He who never thinks any evil, will never speak any, nor do any. Above all things, then, watch well your *thoughts*. "Keep the heart with all diligence; for "out of it are the issues of life." Purge the fountain, and the streams will flow pure.

But is this possible? it will be asked—Thoughts are volatile things; they arise without or against one's will; and you may as well tell us to imprison the wind, as to keep them in order, when they are risen.

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The task is *difficult*, but not *so* difficult. It is difficult, but the greater will be the glory of performing it. It has been done, and therefore may be done again. It is not impossible, for then it had never been commanded. "Keep the heart *with all diligence*;" do your best, and, by God's grace, you will succeed.

The right government of the thoughts, to be sure, requires no small art, vigilance, and resolution. But it is a matter of such vast importance to the peace and improvement of the mind, that it is worth while to be at some pains about it. For a little consideration will show us, that our happiness or unhappiness depends generally upon our own thoughts. What happens without us does not produce either one or the other, but our thought and apprehension about it. The same kind of accident which deprives one person of his reason, will give little or no concern to another; nor can any affliction, perhaps, befall the children of men, which some have not borne with cheerfulness and ease.

It will be readily allowed, that a man who has so numerous and turbulent a family to govern, which are too apt to be at the command of his passions and appetites, ought not to be long from home. If he be, they will soon grow mutinous and disorderly under the conduct of those headstrong guides, and raise great clamours and disturbances, sometimes on very slight occasions indeed. And a more dreadful scene of misery can hardly be imagined, than that which is occasioned by such a tumult and uproar within; when a raging conscience, or inflamed passions, are

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let loose, without check or control. A city in flames is but a faint emblem; or the mutiny of intoxicated mariners, who have murdered their commander, and are destroying one another. The torment of the mind, under such an insurrection and ravage, is not easy to be conceived. The most revengeful person in the world cannot wish his enemy a greater.

A wise Heathen[a] very justly observes, that a man is seldom rendered unhappy by his ignorance of the thoughts of others; but he that does not attend to the motions of his own, is certainly miserable. Yet look around you, and what do you behold? People ranging and roving all the world over, ransacking every thing, gazing at the stars above, digging into the bowels of the earth below, diving into other men's bosoms, never considering, all the while, that the care of their own minds is neglected. He who spends so much of his time *abroad*, must expect to find strange doings when he comes *home*.

A very ingenious and sensible writer has observed, that the selection of our thoughts is of equal consequence with the choice of our company. Permit me to adopt his ideas as the ground-work of the following discourse, adding withal such other reflections as have occurred in a course of meditation on the subject.

Let us consider our thoughts as so much company, and inquire, which of them one would wish to exclude and send away, which to let in and receive;

[a] The Emperor Marcus Antoninus.

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because it is much easier to prevent disagreeable visitants from entering, than to get rid of them when they are entered. It will be a great matter, therefore, to have a trusty porter at the gate; to keep a good guard at the door by which bad thoughts come in, and to avoid those occasions which commonly excite them.

In the first place, then, it may be taken for granted, no one would choose to entertain guests that were *peevish* and *discontented* with every thing. Their room is certainly much better than their company. They are uneasy in themselves, and will soon make the whole house so; like wasps, they are not only restless, but will cause universal uneasiness, and sting the family. Watch, therefore, against all thoughts of this kind, which do but chafe and corrode the mind to no purpose. To harbour these is to do yourself more injury than it is in the power of your greatest enemy to do you. It is equally a Christian's *interest* and duty to "learn, in whatso-"ever state he is, therewith to be content."

There is another set of people, who are not the most comfortable companions in the world; such as are evermore *anxious* about what is to happen, *fearful* of every thing, and *apprehensive* of the worst. Open not the door to thoughts of this complexion; since, by giving way to tormenting fears and suspicions of some approaching danger or troublesome event, you not only anticipate, but double the evil you fear; and undergo much more from the apprehension of it before it comes, than from the whole weight of it when present. Are not all these events

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under the direction of a wise and gracious Providence? If they befall you, they constitute that share of suffering which God hath appointed you, and which he expects you should bear as a Christian. He who sends trials will send strength. Your being miserable beforehand will not keep them off, or enable you to bear them when they come. But suppose (as it often happens) they never come; then you have made yourself wretched, perhaps twenty years together, for nothing; and all would have been just as it is, if you had never had an uneasy thought about it. How often has your fear magnified evils at a distance, which you have found infinitely less in reality than in appearance! Learn to trust God, and be at peace: "in quietness and confidence shall be "your strength."

You esteem it a dreadful thing to be obliged to live with persons who are *passionate* and *quarrelsome*. You undoubtedly judge right; it is like living in a house that is on fire. Dismiss, therefore, as soon as may be, all *angry* and *wrathful* thoughts. They canker the mind, and dispose it to the worst temper in the world, that of fixed malice and revenge. Never recall the ideas or ruminate upon past injuries and provocations. This is the *amusement* of many in their solitary hours; but they might as well play with cannon-balls or thunder-bolts. They may work themselves up to distraction; to hate every thing and every body; and to have the temper and disposition of the *Destroyer* himself. Anger may *steal* into the heart of a wise man; but it *rests* only in the bosom of fools. Make the most candid allowances

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for the offender. Consider his natural temper. Turn your anger into pity. Regard him as ill of a very bad distemper. Think of the patience and meekness of Christ, and the petition in the Lord's prayer; how much you stand in need of forgiveness yourself from God and man; and how foolish it is to torment yourself, because he has behaved amiss. The apostle's precept in this case is, "Let not the "sun go down upon your wrath." The Pythagoreans, a sect of Heathen philosophers, are said to have practised it literally, who, if at any time, in a passion, they had broken out into abusive language, before sunset gave each other their hands, and with them a discharge from all injuries; and so, with a mutual reconciliation, parted friends. Above all things, be sure to set a guard on the tongue, while the angry mood is upon you. The least spark may break out into a conflagration, when cherished by a resentful heart, and fanned by the wind of an angry breath. Aggravating expressions, at such a time, are like oil thrown upon the flames. In anger, as well as in a fever, it is good to have the tongue kept clean and smooth.

Whoever has been much conversant with the world must have often met with *silly*, *trifling*, and *unreasonable* people, who are to be found every where, and thrust themselves into all companies; who will talk for ever about nothing; and whose conversation, if you could enjoy it a month together, would neither instruct nor entertain you. How far preferable is solitude to such society! There are silly, trifling, and unreasonable *thoughts*, as well as

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persons: such are always about, and, if care be not taken, will get into the mind we know not how, and seize and possess it before we are aware; they will hold it in empty, idle speculations, which yield it neither pleasure nor profit, and turn to no manner of account upon earth; only consume time, and prevent a better employment of the mind. And, indeed, there is little difference whether we spend the time in sleep, or in these waking dreams. Nay, if the thoughts which thus insensibly steal upon the mind, be not altogether absurd and nonsensical, yet, if they be impertinent and unseasonable, they ought to be dismissed, because they keep out better company.

There is something particularly tiresome in your projectors and castle-builders, who will detain you for hours with relations of their improbable and impracticable schemes, taking you off, as well as themselves, all the while, from the plain duties of common life; from doing your business, or enjoying your friends. One would never be *at home* to this sort of visitants. Give your porter, therefore, directions to be in a more especial manner upon his guard against all *wild* and *extravagant* thoughts, all *vain* and *fantastical* imaginations. Suffer not your mind to be taken up with thoughts of things that never were, and perhaps never will be; to seek after a visionary pleasure in the prospect of what you have not the least reason to hope, or a needless pain in the apprehension of what you have not the least reason to fear. It is unknown how much time is wasted by many persons in these airy and chimerical

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schemes; while they neglect their duty to God and man, and even their own worldly interest; thus losing the substance by grasping at the shadow, and dreaming themselves princes, till they awake beggars. The truth is, next to a clear conscience and sound judgement, there is not a greater blessing than a regular and well-governed imagination; to be able to view things as they are, in their true light and proper colours; and to distinguish the false images that are painted on the fancy, from the representations of truth and reason. For how common a thing is it for men, before they are aware, to confound reason and fancy, truth and imagination together; to think they believe things true or false, when they only fancy them to be so, because they would have them so; as some have told a story, knowing it to be false, till by degrees they have come to think it true.

There is one sort of guests, who are no strangers to the mind of man, of an Englishman, it is said, above others. These are *gloomy* and *melancholy* thoughts. There are times and seasons, when to some every thing appears dismal and disconsolate, though they know not why. A black cloud hangs hovering over their minds; which, when it falls in showers through their eyes, is dispersed; and all is serene again. This is often purely mechanical; and owing either to some fault in the bodily constitution, or some accidental disorder in the animal frame. It comes on in a dark month, a thick sky, and an east wind; it may be owing in part to our situation as islanders, and in part to the grossness and heaviness of our diet, attended, as it frequently is among those of better con-

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dition, who are chiefly subject to this malady, with the want of a due degree of exercise and labour. In this case, the advice of an honest and skilful physician may be of eminent service. Constant employment and a cheerful friend are two excellent remedies. Certain, however, it is, that whatever means can be devised, they should instantly and incessantly be used, to drive away such dreary and desponding imaginations; for to admit and indulge them, would be as if one was to quit the warm precincts of day, to take leave of life and the sun, and to pass one's time amidst the damps and darkness of a funeral vault. Our faculties, in such circumstances, would be benumbed, and we should soon become, ourselves, useless to all the purposes of our being, like the inhabitants of the tomb, who sleep in death.

It is needless to say, that we should repel all *impure* and *lascivious* thoughts, which taint and defile the mind, and which, though hidden from men, are known to God, in whose eye they are abominable; because, if we possess a fair character, and frequent good company, it is to be hoped they will not have the assurance to knock at the door.

Lastly, with abhorrence reject immediately all *profane* and *blasphemous* thoughts, which are sometimes suddenly injected into the mind, we know not *how*, though we may give a pretty good guess from *whence;* unless, indeed, they proceed from some bodily weakness and indisposition; in which case, as in a former one, the assistance of the physician may be more necessary than that of the divine. When the body is disordered, the mind will be so too; and thoughts

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will arise in it, of which no account can be given. But let those who are thus afflicted know for their comfort, that bare thoughts will not be imputed to them for sins, while they do not cherish and encourage them, but, on the contrary, exert all their endeavours to expel and banish them; which, with prayers for help from above, will not fail of success in the end.

These, then, are the thoughts against which you should carefully guard: such as are peevish and discontented, anxious and fearful, passionate and quarrelsome, silly and trifling, vain and fantastical, gloomy and melancholy, impure and lascivious, profane and blasphemous: a formidable band! to whose importunity, more or less, every one is subject. Reason, aided and inspirited by the grace of God, must watch diligently at the gate, either to bar their entrance, or drive them out forthwith when entered, not only as impertinent, but mischievous intruders, that will otherwise for ever destroy the peace and quiet of the family.

The best method, after all, perhaps, is to contrive matters so as to be always *pre-engaged*, when they come; engaged with better company; and then there will be no room for *them*. For other kind of thoughts there are, to which, when they stand at the door and knock, the porter should open immediately; which you should let in and receive, retain and improve to your souls' health and happiness.

The grand secret in this, as in many other cases, is *employment*. An empty house is every body's property. All the vagrants about the country will take

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up their quarters in it. Always, therefore, have something to do, and you will always have something to think of. God has placed every person in some station; and every station has a set of duties belonging to it. Did we not forget or neglect these, evil thoughts would sue for admission in vain. Indeed, they would not come near our dwelling, any more than idle, vain, profligate people would think of visiting and teasing a man who laboured constantly for his daily bread. If there be any one who is of opinion, that his station does not find him employment, or that it privileges him to be idle, let him only suppose, for a moment, that when his soul shall quit his body, and appear before God, he be asked the two following questions—Whether he could not have done more good in the world? and, Why he did not?

But, besides the duties we owe to others, there is a person very dear to every one of us, who claims no small share of attention and regard, I mean *self*. Each man's mind is a little estate, at his own door, which is to be brought into order, and kept in order. It is naturally a wilderness; it is to be converted into a garden. Weeds and thistles must be rooted up; flowers and fruits must be planted and cultivated. Evil tempers and dispositions must be dispossessed, and good ones introduced in their place. Husbandmen and gardeners, if they mind their business, have enough to think of. Who can say his mind is yet completely in that state in which he wishes it to be? And even if it were, should his diligence be ever so little remitted, it would soon be out of that state again. He, therefore, who will receive and en-

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tertain all thoughts that tend to the improvement of his mind, needeth never complain of being without company.

For this purpose wisdom spreads her ample page before him; the book of universal knowledge lies open to his inspection; and he may enrich his understanding with the experience of ages and generations. The life of one man is like the life of another; and he cannot find himself in circumstances in which his predecessors have not been before him, and his successors shall not be after him. Hence the proper use of *history;* and above all history, that which relates the *lives* of persons in stations similar to our own. But there is no knowledge which may not be turned to use, by him who reads with a faithful and honest intention of being the better for it, by applying all for his own correction and amendment. In the moral world, though not in the natural, there is a *philosopher's stone,* which transmutes all metals into gold. Of the present age it may certainly be said with truth, that it is an age of science. The communication has been opened by commerce with all parts of the world. The prophet Daniel's prediction is fulfilled: "Many "run to and fro, and knowledge is increased." "Wisdom crieth without," but folly has the louder voice, and prevents her from being heard as she should be. Move a little out of the noise of one, and the sound of the other will steal gently upon the ear. Through that she will take possession of the heart, and introduce visitants, of whom you need never to be ashamed.

The heart, however, is capacious; still there is

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room—And, lo, a procession appears advancing towards us, which will fill up every part—led on by one in whose air reigns native dignity, and in whose countenance majesty and meekness sit enthroned together; all the virtues unite their various lustres in her crown, around which spring the ever-blooming flowers of Paradise. We acknowledge at once the queen of heaven, fair Religion, with her lovely train; *Faith*, ever musing on the holy book; *Hope*, resting on her sure anchor, and bidding defiance to the tempests of life; *Charity*, blessed with a numerous family around her, thinking no ill of any one, and doing good to every one; *Repentance*, with gleams of comfort brightening a face of sorrow, like the sun shining through a watery cloud; *Devotion*, with eyes fixed on heaven; *Patience*, smiling at affliction; *Peace*, carrying on a golden sceptre the dove and the olive-branch; and *Joy*, with an anthem-book, singing an hallelujah! Listen to the leader of this celestial band, and she will tell you all you can desire to know. She will carry you to the blissful bowers of Eden; she will inform you how they were lost, and how they are to be regained. She will point out the world's Redeemer, exhibited from the beginning in figure and prophecy, while the patriarchs saw his day at a distance, and the people of God were trained, by their schoolmaster the law, to the expectation of him. She will show you how all events from the creation tended to this great end, and all the distinguished persons, who have appeared upon the stage, performed their parts in the universal drama, the empires of the world rising and falling in obedience to the appointment of

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Providence, for the execution of his counsels. At length, in the fulness of time, she will make known to you the appearance of the long-desired Saviour; explaining the reasons of his humble birth and holy life, of all he said and all he did, of his unspeakable sufferings, his death and burial, his triumphant resurrection and glorious ascension. She will take you within the veil, and give you a sight of Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with honour and immortality, and receiving homage from the hosts of heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect. She will pass over the duration of time and the world, and place before your eyes the throne of judgement, and the unalterable sentence; the glories of the righteous, and the miseries of the wicked.—The thoughts suggested by this variety of interesting subjects, are thoughts which well deserve admittance; and if you will please to admit them, we may venture to say, "the house will be furnished with "guests."

Such guests you would wish to retain; such thoughts to cherish and improve.

For this purpose, when you have started a good thought, pursue it: do not presently lose sight of it, or suffer any trifling fancy that may intervene to divert you from it. Dismiss it not till you have sifted it, and exhausted it, and well considered the different consequences and inferences that result from it. However, retain not the subject any longer than you find your thoughts run freely upon it; for to confine them to it when it is quite worn out, is to give them an unnatural bent without sufficient employment,

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which will make them flag, or be more apt to fly off to something else.

And to keep the mind intent on the subject you think of, you must be at some pains to recall and refix your desultory and rambling thoughts. Lay open the subject in as many lights and views as it is capable of being represented in. Clothe your best ideas in pertinent and well-chosen words, deliberately pronounced, or commit them to writing. Accustom yourself to *speak* naturally and reasonably on all subjects, and you will soon learn to *think* so on the best; especially, if you often converse with those persons who speak, and those authors who write, in that manner.

The sincerity of a true religious principle cannot be better known, than by the readiness with which the thoughts turn themselves to God, and the pleasure with which they are employed in devout exercises. And though a person may not always be so well pleased with hearing religious things talked of by others, whose different taste, sentiments, or manner of expression may have something disagreeable; yet if he have no inclination to think about them himself, or to converse with himself about them, he has great reason to suspect that his heart is not right with God. But if he frequently and delightfully exercise his mind in divine contemplations, it will not only be a good mark of his sincerity, but will habitually dispose it for the reception of the best and most useful thoughts, and fit it for the noblest entertainments. For if bad thoughts are as infectious as bad

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company, good thoughts solace, instruct, and entertain the mind like good company. And this is one great advantage of retirement, that a man may choose what company he pleases from within himself.

But as in the world we oftener light into bad company than good, so likewise even in solitude we are oftener troubled with impertinent and unprofitable thoughts, than entertained with agreeable and useful ones. And a person who has so far lost the command of himself as to lie at the mercy of every foolish or vexatious thought, is much in the same situation as a *host*, whose house is open to all *comers*; whom, though ever so noisy, rude, and troublesome, he cannot get rid of; but with this difference, that the *latter* hath some recompense for his trouble; the *former* none at all, but is robbed of his peace and quiet for nothing.

And let no one imagine, as too many are apt to do, that it is a matter of indifference what thoughts he entertains in his heart, since the reason of things concurs with the testimony of Scripture to assure us, that "the thought of foolishness," when allowed by us, "is itself sin." Therefore, in the excellent words of an excellent poet [b],

Guard well thy thoughts; our thoughts are heard in heaven.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are "the issues of life."

And thou Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets

[b] Dr. Young.

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are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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DISCOURSE XXIII.

LIFE A JOURNEY.

Psalm cxix. 19.

I am a stranger in the earth.

And was it, then, peculiar to the son of Jesse, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, to be so? No, surely; it is a character in which every son of Adam appears and acts upon the stage of life. We have all a home; but that home is in heaven. We are strangers in the earth; we are here in a foreign land, through which we travel to our native country, there to possess everlasting habitations. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, having, in the eleventh chapter, celebrated the Old Testament worthies, and the wonders which they wrought, through the divine principle that was in them, sums up the account in the following words—"These all died in faith, not "having received the promises, but having seen them "afar off, and were persuaded of them, and em- "braced them, and confessed that they were strang- "ers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say "such things, declare plainly, that they seek a coun- "try. And truly, if they had been mindful of that "country from whence they came out, they might "have had opportunity to have returned; but now

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"they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: "wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their "God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Agreeably to this account, if we look into the story of those friends and favourites of heaven, the ancestors of the Israelitish nation, we find them sojourning in a land that was not theirs; dwelling only in tents, soon pitched, and as soon removed again; having no ground of their own to set their foot on, save only a possession of a burying place (and that purchased of the inhabitants), where they might rest from their travels, till they shall pass, at the resurrection of the just, to their durable inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Such was Jacob's notion of human life, expressed in his answer to the Egyptian monarch, who had inquired his age—"The days of the years of my pil-"grimage," says the patriarch, "are an hundred and "thirty years; few and evil have the days of the "years of my life been, and have not attained to the "days of the years of the life of my fathers in the "days of their pilgrimage."

Look at the posterity of Jacob, the chosen people of the Most High, after they had been delivered from the house of bondage. View them likewise dwelling in tents; sojourning for forty years in a vast and howling wilderness; attacked by enemies; stung by serpents; and in danger of perishing for want of provisions; but still supported by the hand of Providence, and at length conducted to the land of promise. Consider, O Christian, this history, and in it behold thy pictured life!

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When the children of Israel had taken possession of Canaan, they might be said, in some sense, to have obtained a settlement. But, in truth and propriety, what settlement can any man be said to have obtained, to whom will soon be brought (and he knows not how soon) the message which was brought to king Hezekiah,—" Set thine house in order, for thou " must die!" This was the case with the Israelites, no less after their settlement in the land of Canaan than before it. Notwithstanding, therefore, the *rest* which God had there given them, you find David, in the ninety-fifth Psalm, speaking of another future and distant *rest*, still remaining for the people of God, in a better country, that is, an heavenly. And, accordingly, though settled in the promised land, you hear him still crying out, in the words of the text—" I am a stranger in the earth."

And what shall we say with regard to the Son of God himself, when for us and for our salvation, in the form of man, he honoured this world with his presence? Did he not pass through it as a foreigner returning to the celestial mansions from whence he descended? Did not he live and act as such, and was he not treated as such by those to whom he came? Yes, verily, he was a stranger and a sojourner here below, as all his fathers according to the flesh were before him, and as all his children according to the spirit have been, and must be, after him upon the earth. The rule is a general one, and admits of no exception.

A consideration thus striking and affecting, cannot be without its use in the regulation of our manners:

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and I have somewhere read of a pious old man, who, being desired by a young pupil and disciple to give him some one short precept which might contain all religion in a little compass, and serve, at all times and in all places, for the direction of his conduct through life, replied—"Only remember that you "are a stranger in the earth."

Let us, therefore, take this for our ground, that life is a journey, and man a traveller; and let us inquire, what manner of persons, upon this principle, we ought to be.

And here it will immediately occur to us, in the first place, that wherever, in the course of his journey, a traveller may be, his heart is still at home. Nothing can detain his thoughts, for any long time together, from his country, his house, and his family, to which he is returning. The spirit of man is not a native of this lower world. It came originally from above; and, upon the dissolution of the body, will return to God who gave it, to its own proper country, to the house and family of its heavenly Father. These, then, are the objects, which, if once we are accustomed to regard ourselves as strangers and sojourners upon earth, will continually employ our thoughts.

The end of our journey will ever be uppermost in our minds, according to the precepts delivered in the Scriptures, and the examples afforded us by the prophets and apostles—"Set your affections on "things above, not on things on the earth." "Seek "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth "on the right hand of God." "My soul hath a desire

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"and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord;" "when shall I come, and appear before God!" "I "desire to depart, and to be with Christ." "Let us go "forth bearing our reproach; for here we have no "continuing city, but we seek one to come." These are the wishes and the expressions of men like ourselves, encompassed with infirmities. Why, then, are they not ours? Plainly, because we mistake or forget our true condition in this present world. We imagine ourselves to be at home, when we are really abroad and upon a journey.

But although the traveller's first and chief delight is the recollection of his home, which lies as a cordial at his heart, and refreshes him every where and at all seasons, this does by no means prevent him from taking that pleasure in the several objects presenting themselves on the road, which they are capable of affording, and were indeed intended to afford. He surveys, in passing, the works and beauties of nature and art, meadows covered with flocks, valleys waving with corn, verdant woods, blooming gardens, and stately buildings. He surveys and enjoys them, perhaps, much more than their owners do, but leaves them without a sigh, reflecting on the far greater and sincerer joys that are waiting for him at home. Such exactly is the temper and disposition with which the Christian traveller should pass through the world. His religion does not require him to be gloomy and sullen, to shut his eyes, or to stop his ears; it debars him of no pleasure, of which a thinking and reasonable man would wish to partake. It directs him not to shut himself up in a cloister,

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alone, there to mope and moan away his life; but to walk abroad, to behold the things which are in heaven and earth, and to give glory to him who made them; reflecting, at the same time, that if in this fallen world, which is soon to be consumed by fire, there are so many objects to entertain and delight him, what must be the pleasures of that world which is to endure for ever, and to be his eternal home! Flocks feeding in green meadows by rivers of water, remind him of the future happy condition of the righteous, when "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, "for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne "shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living "fountains of water." From fading plantations he carries his thoughts to the paradise of God, where, in immortal youth and beauty, grows the tree of life, whose leaf never withers, and which bears its fruit through the unnumbered ages of eternity. Earthly cities and palaces cause him to remember thee, O thou holy city, heavenly Jerusalem, whose walls are salvation, and thy gates praise, and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in the midst of thee!—He who sees the world in this light, will draw its sting, and disarm it of its power to hurt; he will so use it as not to abuse it, because the fashion of it passes away; he will so enjoy it, as to be always ready to leave it for a better; he will not think of settling at his inn [a], because it is pleasantly situated. He remembers that he is

[a] See a beautiful passage, applicable in the Christian sense, Epict. B. II. chap. xxiii. p. 212. Carter.

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a traveller; he forgets not that he is a stranger in the earth.

We are not, however, to expect, that we shall meet with nothing but pleasure and entertainment on the road of life. The traveller knows he is to look for difficulties and dangers upon a journey, especially if it be a long one, and through an enemy's country. The ways may be rough or deep, the weather stormy and tempestuous, robbers and murderers may attack him in the road, or wild beasts spring upon him from the forest; and the accommodations and provisions from which he is to seek refreshment after his fatigue, may prove very ill qualified to afford it. Against all these incidents, possible and probable, the wise traveller is forearmed with courage and patience, two qualities without which his expedition is likely to be very uncomfortable. And here he finds his chief support from the consideration, that all these inconveniences will have an end; that he is abroad upon a journey, and that all he can suffer will be amply recompensed by the comforts and heart-felt joys he is to experience at home.

Let the same mind be also in the Christian traveller, who is accomplishing his journey through this world to another

Let him not think to find the path always smooth, or to tread continually upon roses. In a world like ours, there are more thorns than flowers. Often, in the concerns of life, will he find himself perplexed with doubts, and entangled in difficulties, through which he must make his way with toil, and not without pain. His passage will be obstructed by rocks

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of offence, at which, unless he tread with skill and caution, he will stumble and fall. Frequently, therefore, will he have occasion to cry out, "Hold thou up my "goings in thy paths, O Lord, that my footsteps slip "not!" "Give thine angels charge over me, to keep "me in all my ways!"

As the road will not always be safe beneath, so neither will the sun always shine upon him from above. Life is a day, and in a day there are many changes of weather. Youth is the morning, when the sky, perhaps, is clear and serene; every thing smiles upon our traveller, and invites him to proceed. But anon all is overcast, and the heaven grows black with clouds and wind. The hour of prosperity is past, and the storms of adversity and affliction gather round his head. The rain descends, the lightnings flash, the thunder roars, and the Almighty seems to set his face against him: "Fearfulness and trem-"bling come upon him, horror overwhelms him; and "he says, O that I had wings like a dove! for then "would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would "I wander afar off, and remain in the wilderness. "I would hasten my escape from the windy storm "and tempest."

Nor is this the whole of his danger. There are those who lie in wait, at such dark seasons, to despoil him of all that is truly dear and valuable. Evil men and evil spirits endeavour to deprive him of his honour, his virtue, his integrity, his religion, his life—his eternal life. The troubles of the world, consuming cares, and envenomed passions, are in motion, like the wild beasts of the forest,

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howling and hissing at him from all quarters. Now he has need of all his courage and steadfastness; and it behoves him to march on resolutely, holding fast, in one hand, the shield of faith, in the other, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; strengthening and comforting himself with those divine words of the Psalmist, in the ninety-first Psalm —"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the "young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample "under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, "therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, "because he hath known my name. He shall call "upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with "him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him "my salvation."

Such are the dangers and hardships to be encountered by the Christian traveller, who, considering himself as such, and knowing he can no otherwise attain to the end of his journey, encounters them accordingly, and at length overcomes them all, upon the principle thus laid down by St. Paul— "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal "weight of glory; while we look not at the things "which are seen, but at the things which are not "seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; "but the things which are not seen are eternal. For "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle "were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

On the same principle, the Christian traveller, like

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all others, takes up with the accommodations he finds on the road, and learns to be "content with such "things as he hath." No traveller was ever in greater straits than St. Paul. But hear what he says of himself—"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, there-"with to be content. I know both how to be abased, "and I know how to abound; every where and in "all things I am instructed, both to be full and to "be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Were we settled upon earth for ever, there would be some excuse for our being solicitous where we lived, what we ate, what we drank, and wherewithal we were clothed. But when we consider in how very short a time it will be exactly the same thing, whether we dwelt in a palace, or a cottage; whether we sat down to two courses, or two dishes; whether our garments were made of silk, or of wool; whether we were waited on by twenty servants, or by one; it is not worth while to break the peace of our minds about such unessential circumstances. If God vouchsafe us a share of the good things of the world in our passage through it, let us enjoy them with thankfulness, and let us be charitable and kind to our fellow-travellers who are not so well provided for. If such good things are denied us, still let us be thankful for what we have. It is far better to want them than to be wedded to them. Let us not forget, that he who travels, as well as he who "contends for the ma-"stery," must be "temperate in all things," if he would travel with ease and pleasure; and therefore, considering the difficulty of continuing so in the midst of plenty, it is happy for us, generally speaking, when

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temptations to be otherwise are not thrown in our way. "I beseech you," says St. Peter, "as strangers and "pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war "against the soul." We are strangers and pilgrims. We must up, and be moving on. The Lord of life, to show that on the earth he had no abiding city, was born at an inn; and there was no room for him but in the stable. Such were the accommodations with which he was content. What he once said to his disciples, he says to all—"Arise, let us go hence."

But it is not enough that the Christian traveller be content. Let him be cheerful, and beguile the tediousness of the way with a sacred song—"Awake up, "my glory; awake, lute and harp!—I will praise "thee, O Lord, among the people, I will sing unto "thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great "unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will "praise my God while I have my being. And so "shall my words please him; my joy shall be in the "Lord." This is the language of the very same person who says, in the text, "I am a stranger in the "earth." Thus it was, that he consoled himself under the fatigues of his journey, and rejoiced even in tribulation, because every step he set, however painful, brought him nearer to his eternal home. Consider the case of those two travellers, Paul and Silas, in the dungeon of a prison, at the dead of midnight, with their feet fast in the stocks. And in this situation how did they employ themselves? In groaning and lamenting? No; they "prayed and "sang praises unto God." Let us hear no more of

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murmuring and complaining. In all things let us give thanks, and be able to say, with David, "Thy "statutes have been my songs in the house of my "pilgrimage."

It will greatly contribute towards relieving the sufferings and hardships of our journey, if we can have the company of some of like sentiments, tempers, and dispositions, who are travelling the same way, with whom we may converse about the country to which we are all going, consult upon the best means of arriving safely at it, and mutually communicate our observations upon the objects that present themselves, and the incidents that happen upon the road. "They "that fear thee," says the Psalmist, "will be glad "when they see me, because I have hoped in thy "word. I am a companion of all them that fear "thee, and keep thy precepts.—We took sweet "counsel together, and walked in the house of God as "friends." He who travels alone, will often find himself weary and melancholy: he will often want help and assistance. As the wise man observes, "Two are bet-"ter than one; for, if they fall" (and who can at any "time be assured he shall not?) "the one will help "up his fellow." Much does it concern us, in making our connexions and choosing our friends, to make and choose such as will forward us on our way, and continue with us unto the end; and it is happy for us when they who stand in the nearest relation to us, and with whom we must of necessity spend the greatest part of our time, are of this sort. Blessed are they who thus go through life together, in peace and love, comforting and encouraging one another,

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and talking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. To these heirs of salvation angels delight to minister; and that which happened to the two disciples upon the road to Emmaus, will happen to them: "Jesus himself," though they do not know it, "will draw near, and go with them."

With such companions, and such a guide, our journey will seem short, because it will become pleasant; and there will be nothing formidable even in the last and worst part of it, death itself. In the history which the Scriptures give us of good men in old time, it is worth observing, that their dying appears to have been a circumstance as easy and indifferent to them as to the historian who relates it. With Moses it is only, Go up to mount Nebo, and die; with Aaron, Ascend to mount Hor, and do the same. And, before them, we find the holy patriarchs, when the appointed hour came, calling their children about them, bequeathing to posterity the promised blessing of salvation by Messiah, gathering up their feet into the bed, and dying with the same satisfaction and complacency as they would have fallen asleep. And why? but because, having been always accustomed to think of themselves as strangers in the earth, they constantly regarded death as a departure to that other and better country of which they lived in perpetual expectation, and could not therefore be surprised or alarmed at being called to take possession, as knowing they began their journey in order to finish it. Could we think as they did, we should live as they did, and die as they did. Nor should we grieve for the dead who have died in the Lord. They have only

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passed us upon the road, and are gone, as it were, to prepare for our reception. And surely, in the journey of life, as in other journeys, it is a pleasing reflection that, whatever usage we may meet with abroad (and strangers do not often meet with the best), we have friends who are thinking of us at home, and will receive us with joy when our journey is at an end.—And, lo, the heavens are opened, and the habitations of the blessed disclose themselves to view. The glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all that have departed hence, from the beginning of the world, in the faith and fear of God, a great multitude which no man can number, are seen standing in white robes, with palms in their hands. They beckon us away to those blissful regions from whence sin and sorrow are for ever excluded, and into which they who are admitted "go no more "out." All, once, like us, trod, with many a toilsome step, this valley of weeping; all, once, were "strangers in the earth." Now, they rest from their labours, and are entered into the joy of their Lord. They have accomplished happily their journey, and through faith and patience have inherited the promises.—A seraph's voice, from the eternal throne, calls to every one of us—"Go, and do thou likewise."

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DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE FULNESS OF TIME.

GALATIANS, IV. 4, 5.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

THE words make part of the epistle for the day. And none could have been chosen with greater propriety: none can more fully represent to us, in a short compass, the wonderful nature and blessed effects of the redemption, begun as at this season to be wrought for us. Highly fit it is, that our thoughts should still continue to be employed upon it. The angels desire to look into it: we surely cannot yet be weary of meditating upon it. To refresh, to quicken, to fix, the impressions that may have been made, is the intention of the following discourse, in which some reflections shall be offered, on the several particulars of the text, exactly in the order in which they lie; for a better cannot be devised.

I. "When the fulness of time was come."—The same truth is here pointed out, which is taught us by the wise man in the book of Ecclesiastes: "To

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"every thing, and to every purpose under heaven, "there is a time and season." Events do not come to pass, one at this time, and another at that, by mere chance. He, who created the world, regulates and disposes the things that are passing in it, appointing to each its time. This time, all circumstances considered, is always the very best and fittest. It is impossible for *us* to consider all circumstances, or, perhaps, one thousandth part of them; and therefore, it is impossible for us to say which time is the best and fittest. The great God only can do this. To the eye of the divine mind (if we may so express it), all events, with all their circumstances, from the beginning to the end of the world, present themselves at once, and stand arranged, by infinite wisdom, each in its due time and place. This all-seeing and all-directing Providence extends not only to the rise and fall of empires, or the births and deaths of great men, but to every the smallest concern. The hairs of our heads are numbered, and a sparrow falls not to the ground unnoticed. In the Scriptures, where the designs of God are opened, and we are admitted, as it were, behind the scenes, this is shown in many instances. In others, where his designs are kept secret from us, we must learn to trust, and not presumptuously determine that this or that event takes place at an *unseasonable* time, or fancy that we could have ordered things in a better manner.

What has been said must apply in the strongest manner to the birth of Christ, which being the most important event that ever did happen, must needs have happened at that very time which of all others

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was proper, by the apostle in the text called "the "fulness of time;" when all the designs of God respecting it were ripe and ready for accomplishment. A thinking man, who sits down to consider the dispensations going before from the beginning, with the then state of the world, both Jew and Gentile, may discover many reasons why the time of Christ's appearance was the proper time. Some have asked why he did not come sooner? And if the world should last many ages longer, and his religion seem to be perishing, others may ask why he did not come later? All such questions have no foundation but in our own ignorance. Could we see as God sees, we should see that all is right: since we cannot see, we must believe; because all-wise and all-righteous is He who has ordained it so to be as it is. I would wish to impress this general consideration on your minds, as one which alone will carry you safe through all doubts and difficulties, all dangers and distresses. Only love God, and serve him; and then, "all things" cannot but "work together," under his direction, "for good" to you in the end.

II. "When the fulness of time"—that time judged to be, on all accounts, the fittest—"was come, God "sent forth his Son." He had a Son therefore to send forth; that Son of whom it is said, that he was in the bosom of the Father; that he had glory with the Father before the world was; that Son, by the beloved disciple, St. John, styled "THE WORD, who was in the "beginning with God, and who was God; by whom "all things were made, and without whom was not "any thing made that was made;" that Son, who

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came down from heaven; who "came from the "Father, and returned to him;" that Son, who says, "I and the Father are one; I am in the Father, "and the Father in me; he that hath seen me hath "seen the Father." These passages show you, as clearly as language can show, that the Saviour born, as at this season, though born as a man, was in reality more than man; a divine person, who had being in heaven before the world began; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven; whose title is, the SON, or the WORD, of God. That these two titles belong to one and the same person, will be evident to you from a wonderful description in the nineteenth chapter of St. John's Revelation, which I cannot forbear reciting; "I saw heaven opened, "and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon "him was called Faithful and True; and in righ-"teousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes "were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many "crowns; and he had a name written, that no man "knew but he himself; and he was clothed with a "vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called THE "WORD OF GOD. And he hath on his vesture and "on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, "AND LORD OF LORDS." The being here described is certainly a *person;* and that person can be no other than our ever-blessed Redeemer, going forth to judge and take vengeance on his enemies. He is styled the WORD OF GOD, and must be the same WORD mentioned in the beginning of St. John's Gospel, who "was in the beginning with God, and was God."

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These things none can, with any show of reason, gainsay. Proceed we, therefore,

III. To reflect upon the next particular, that this divine person became man—"God sent forth his "Son, made of a woman." And if the Son, thus sent forth, were indeed no more than a mere man, why should it be said, "made of a woman;" since every man is made of a woman, and, in the nature of things, can have no other original? There is nothing extraordinary in this circumstance; and in speaking of a mere man, it could never have been mentioned. But the fact is, that the divine person above described appeared in our nature, and was "made of a woman." Herein is the wonder of love, the root and fountain of our salvation, pointed out by the apostle, and expressed or implied in so many other passages of Scripture;—such as these which follow—"The word being incarnate, that is, made "or becoming flesh; the Son of God, being sent in "the likeness of sinful flesh, partaking of flesh and "blood, his taking the form of a servant, being made "in the likeness of men, being found in fashion as a "man, assuming the seed of Abraham, his descend-"ing from heaven, coming forth from the Father, be-"ing sent, and coming into the world, the day-spring "from on high visiting us, eternal life being mani-"fested." In the name of common sense, if our Saviour be in reality no more than a mere man, like other men, what can all these expressions signify? They must have been used (as one should be tempted to think) only to deceive and mislead man-

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kind in that point which of all others is the most important. No—surely; the result of all taken together is, and can be, no other than this—There was a blessed and glorious person, who from all eternity did subsist in the form of God, being the Son of God, one in nature with his Father, the express image, or apt character, of his substance; by a temporal generation he truly became man, taking human nature into an union with the divine; made "like unto us "in all things," as the apostle saith, "sin only ex-"cepted." He had a body like ours, which was nourished and did grow, which needed and received sustenance, which was tender and sensible, frail and subject to suffering, which was bruised with stripes, torn with scourges, pricked with thorns, pierced with nails, transfixed with a spear, which was mortal, and underwent death, as our mortal bodies do when the breath goes out of them.

He had also a soul endued with the same faculties as ours. His understanding was capable of learning and improvement; for, as man, he was ignorant of some things which he might know; and "he grew," it is said, "in *wisdom*, as well as stature." His will was subject and submissive to the divine will. "Let "this cup, if it be possible, pass from me; neverthe-"less, not my will but thine be done." He had the several appetites of meat, of drink, of sleep, and rest; for we read that he was hungry, that he thirsted, that he was weary. He had the various human passions and affections—such as were natural and unblameable—and these of the most troublesome and afflictive sort, such as zeal, pity, sorrow. Upon occasion of his

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friend Lazarus's death, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled; he then, and upon other occasions, did weep; and you all know what excesses of sorrow, what anxieties and agonies, what tribulations, disturbances, and amazements, the evangelists describe him to have undergone at his passion.

These particulars place it beyond all doubt, that he was perfect man, as the passages before cited show that he was perfect God; perfect God, and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. His human nature was the true tabernacle, or tent, which the apostle mentions, of a more perfect building than that of old; the Divinity was the GLORY which, descending from heaven, filled it, took possession of it, and dwelled in it. "The word was "made flesh, and dwelt among us—God sent forth "his Son, made of a woman."

And why should this be thought a thing incredible? If "the reasonable soul, and flesh," the former a spiritual, the latter a material substance, be so united, and that in a manner by us unknown and inconceivable, as to compose "one man;" why should we deny the possibility of such an union between God and man as to render them "one Christ[a]." Does reason protest against it? Nay, verily, but she bears a powerful testimony to it. The expectation of such a *divine* Saviour was from the beginning; the

[a] Q. The objection, that the cases are not parallel, since in the former there are not two *conscious* beings united; and that God and the creature should have *one* and the *same consciousness* is not conceivable.—See DODDRIDGE'S *Lectures*, p. 394.

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notion went out into all the earth. That God should, in some extraordinary manner, visit and dwell with man, is an idea which, as we read the writings of the ancient Heathens, meets us in a thousand different forms. It is the voice of nature, sickening, languishing, and at her last gasp, under a load of sin and sorrow from which none less than God could deliver her, and crying out, from age to age, with the dying patriarch—"I have waited for thy "salvation, O Lord!"—"Lord, in thee, in thee alone "have I trusted; let me never be confounded."

Such, then, is the Saviour, whose birth at Bethlehem we this day celebrate. "God so loved the "world, that he gave his only begotten Son;" and what love must any person bear to the world who could do this for it? The Son abased himself, that we might be exalted. The Son became a subject, that the subjects—and those subjects in rebellion—might become sons;—"heirs of God, and joint "heirs with Christ." And what more could have been done by a Son?

The Saviour was God, that he might save us by his almighty power; that he might remove the most stubborn difficulties in the way to our salvation; that he might subdue our enemies, command nature, abolish death, and vanquish hell; that he might satisfy justice, conciliate and appease by dignity of person, value of merit, nearness and dearness to the Father; that on his doctrine, his example, and his laws, might be stamped the character of Divinity, denominating them the coin of heaven, the royal image and superscription, which it is treason to efface.

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The Saviour was man, that as man lost his divine favour, man might regain it; that "as by one man's "disobedience many were made sinners, so by the "obedience of one many might be made righteous;" "that as man did approve, so man might condemn, "sin in the flesh;" that "as by man came death, by "man might come also the resurrection of the dead;" "that as in the first Adam all die, even so in Christ, "the second Adam," who was likewise the Lord from heaven, "may all be made alive;" that through sympathy, compassion, a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, he might propitiate for our faults, intercede for our welfare, pity and aid us in our distresses; be tender of our good, sensible of our necessities; "in "all things it behoved him to be made like unto his "brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful "High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make "reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that "he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able "to succour them that are tempted." In a human form he became visible, audible, familiar; less amazing and more obliging. He became a copy for us in behaving, in moderating our appetites, in governing our passions, in employing the powers of soul and body, in passing through all conditions, and accommodating ourselves to all events. So lively a pattern, with such power and to such effect, could never otherwise have been exhibited. O what a comfort it is to think that we shall be judged by such a person! And with what propriety was he appointed to recapitulate (as the apostle has it) and reconcile all things in heaven and earth, thus allied as he was to both parties;

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Son of God, brother to us; that so he might dispense God's grace, and purchase our peace!—"Lord, to "whom" else, then, "shall we go? Thou hast"—thou only canst have—"the words of eternal life."

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DISCOURSE XXV.

THE EXISTENCE AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

REVELATION, VII. 11.

All the angels stood round the throne.

AMONG the festivals of our church, we find one celebrated at this season of the year in honour of the holy angels. To justify such her appointment, and point out to you the many advantages to be obtained from it, is the design of the following discourse; in which some thoughts shall be offered on the existence of angels, their nature and condition, the perfect obedience paid by them to God, and the kind services rendered to man.

And, first, respecting the existence of angels.

It is needless to trouble you with the opinions of the Heathen concerning beings of this kind; because they could utter nothing but what was either merely conjectural, or else derived to them by tradition from an original revelation. We have better guides; we can go to the fountain head. Conjecture is useless where certainty can be had; and tradition is of no account when the revelation itself is before us.

Nor does it seem at all necessary, by a long series

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of texts to demonstrate that there are such beings as angels. They who have ever looked into the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, can have no doubt upon this head. The fact is clear: our business shall be to convince you that it is interesting.

For it may be said, perhaps, to what purpose discourse to us concerning the inhabitants of a world future, remote, and of which our ideas are very confused and indeterminate? Let us rather attend to the world in which we live, and to them that dwell therein.

It would be perfectly right so to do, if the world in which we live were the only one with which we were connected, and death the final period of our existence. But no one person, I dare say, who now hears me, seriously imagines this to be the case. And if there be another world which is to receive us for ever, after our departure hence, the existence of its inhabitants, with whom we are to spend an eternity, becomes a speculation both pleasing and important. The state of our being, you say, is future. It is so to-day; but before to-morrow it may be present to some: a very few years must render it present to all. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the change is effected: every connexion with this world is dissolved, and we become at once citizens of another, and members of a society altogether new. You say it is remote. That by no means appears. It may not be "far from every one of us." A man who had lived always in the darkness of a prison, and only heard of the world we now enjoy, might fancy, from

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all which his own experience taught him, that it must needs be remote; whereas, nothing more would be requisite to convince him of his mistake, than to open the doors of his prison-house and lead him forth to liberty and the sun. Could a child in its mother's womb be made sensible it was to be born into a new world, it might entertain the same prejudice respecting the supposed distance; but when the appointed time for its birth came, a single instant would show that it was *only* a prejudice. The spiritual and eternal world, into which we are, at a destined hour, to be born, may be, like its Divine Maker and King, near us, and round about us, in a manner of which we are not aware, nor shall be till we enter it; till we burst the intervening shell, and all the glories of the invisible system present themselves to view.

But our ideas of this future world are confused and indeterminate. Not more so than those conceived by the man in prison, or the child in the womb, could it conceive any, of the present world in which we live; not more so, than the ideas formed of things not seen, by comparison with things seen. We have the divine assurance of God's word that such a world exists; and the pictures there drawn of it, if we considered them as we ought to do, must make us impatient to behold the original.

But the truth is, that whatever ideas of a future and invisible world may be, at certain times, impressed upon our minds, they are presently effaced by a tide of business or pleasure, and stand therefore in need of being continually refreshed and re-

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newed. Now, what can do this so effectually as frequent meditations on the blessed inhabitants of that world, the holy angels? We love to recollect a place by the circumstance of those friends we have in it. By thinking of them, we are led to think of the place where they are, and learn to love and desire it the more. An intercourse is by this means opened, a correspondence established, between heaven and earth.

And here give me leave to ask, whether we are not often guilty of neglecting and forgetting, in a manner unkind, at least, our friends who are gone before us to a better country? When once they are departed, we suffer the remembrance of them soon to slip our minds, as if we thought they ceased any longer to exist. To pray for the dead seems needless and absurd, unless we supposed their condition in another life still undetermined, and that they were undergoing pains, from which our prayers might contribute to release them. But to commemorate the day of their departure; to think of them, and their situation; to recollect their virtues, and express our wishes of seeing and being with them again, in God's good time—this surely would be an exercise equally pious and profitable, and to which no good protestant can have any reasonable objection. The spirits of the just, when gone hence, are with the angels; we should think of them together, invigorating at once our faith, our hope, and our charity. Thus much for the instruction and consolation to be derived from the Scripture doctrine of the existence of angels. Still more will be derived from a consideration,

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Secondly, of what is revealed concerning their nature and condition. Shut up in this world of matter, we might be apt to imagine there are no creatures of a nature and condition different from our own. But we are informed, upon the best authority, that there are creatures of a very different nature and condition. Angels are spirits. Not formed of the same gross materials, they are free from the inconveniences we feel, the temptations and sufferings to which we are subject. Their appearance is glorious as the light of heaven, and their motion, like that, rapid, and, as it were, instantaneous. Pure and active as the most pure and active elements with which we are acquainted, light and fire; strangers equally to sin and sorrow; they live evermore in the presence of God, and enjoy all the felicity which that presence can bestow; expressing continually their sense of such felicity in hymns of praise before the throne. This is the sum and substance of the many descriptions to be met with in sacred writ.

The contemplation of so many excellent and happy beings opens our understandings, and enlarges our conceptions of the Creator's power and goodness.

But if we ourselves are miserable, what benefit, it will be asked, can result to us from contemplating the happiness of others? Will not our misery be rather aggravated than alleviated by it? We do not cease to be wretched upon earth because the angels are otherwise in heaven.

Redeemed by the Son of God, leave off, O man! to complain. Wait but for a little while in faith and patience, and their happiness shall be yours. The

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Redeemer himself has said (and shall he not perform it?) that, at the resurrection, we shall become "like "the angels of God." Is not the case then greatly altered? Is there no pleasure in contemplating a felicity, the model after which our own will be formed and fashioned? Surely it is the very consideration, which, above all others, should cause us to forget our uneasiness, and remember our misery no more. Angels are glorious and happy beings, and we shall be so too! They are glorious, because they are pure; and we must be therefore pure, in order to be glorious. The misery complained of is the furnace in which we are to be made pure, that dust and ashes may be changed into transparent glass. "Purge "away the dross," says the wise man, "and a "vessel shall come forth for the finer." Our evil tempers and affections are that dross. With them we cannot enter into the kingdom of God; nor should find any happiness there, if we could enter. They must be separated, and left behind. Severe trials, very severe trials, are often necessary to separate them, and are sent for that purpose. When the metal is stubborn, coals of fire, for the most salutury purpose, are heaped upon its head. The Son of God is with his faithful servants in the furnace, and will bring them safely out; when, transformed to angels, they shall sing the song of the redeemed: "It is "good for us, that we have been afflicted."

From the nature and condition of angels, let us advert,

Thirdly, to that perfect service, that ready and unlimited obedience, by them paid to their Almighty

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Creator. Their felicity does not consist in freedom and independence. An attempt was once made by some of them to attain it. "There was war even in "heaven" on that account; but Michael prevailed, and the dragon was cast out. The angels that fell, fell by rebellion; they who kept their station, kept it by obedience, and are thus addressed by the Psalmist: "Ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength, ye that "fulfil his commandment, hearkening to the voice "of his word." Like the lightnings, which say, "Here we are," they are represented as waiting before the throne, ready, at the divine command, to fly to the extremities of the world. Instead of using seditious language against their sovereign, we find Michael the archangel "not bringing a railing accu-"sation" against the great adversary himself, but mildly saying, "The Lord rebuke thee!"—a circumstance much to be regarded by all who have the misfortune to be engaged in disputes. Nor are the angels more exact in loyalty to their King, than in preserving due subordination in their several ranks, and under their respective leaders, without which peace could not be in heaven, any more than on earth. This was the reflection of our judicious and admirable Hooker, when a friend asked him, just before his death, on what subject his thoughts might at that time be employed. The subject which engaged his dying thoughts ought constantly to engage our living ones; since, in the prayer composed and delivered out to his disciples by our Lord and Saviour, the obedience of the angels is proposed as the pattern to be imitated by us; as the copy after which we should

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diligently write: "Thy will be done on earth, as it "is in heaven." Were this once the case, then would "the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad." The will of God would be sought, in order to be found, and found, in order to be executed. We do not indeed stand in the immediate presence, or receive our orders at once from the throne: but the Scriptures convey them, and, by his gracious Spirit, "God is in the midst of us;" "we likewise may ful-"fil his commandment, by hearkening to the voice of "his word." Had we but a due respect to the example set us by the angels, we should not be so careless, as we are, about knowing what the will of the Lord is; much less should we be averse from knowing it, because averse from doing it. Angels are ever on the watch; eager to do it, and therefore eager to know it. We should not presume to determine which precepts we may observe, and which we may neglect: the obedience of an angel is universal. We should not put off our duty from day to day: the obedience of an angel is prompt and ready. We should perform it, not as a task, but as a pleasure: the obedience of an angel is hearty and fervent; it is his delight, because he loves God: it would be ours, if we loved God in the same degree. To love, no commandments are grievous. The difficulties remain as they were; but the motive overcomes them with ease. The contest, at first, among angelic spirits in heaven, and since, among the children of Adam, through all their successive generations upon earth, has been, in reality, a contest between pride and love. The success and termination

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of it may direct us where to choose our party. Pride, as displayed in the rebellion of Lucifer, threw angels from the height of heaven, into the bottomless pit: love, as manifested in the obedience of Christ, exalted man from the dust, to the thrones of angels in heaven. This leads us to consider,

Lastly, the benevolence and charity of the holy angels: the love they have always shown for man, and the services by them rendered to him.

And here a scene opens, worthy of all admiration, gratitude, and praise. For never do those blessed spirits obey with greater delight the commands of their Maker, than when mankind is the subject of those commands; so deeply, from the beginning, have they interested themselves in our welfare.

When the world was created, and man put in possession of it, these "morning stars sang together, "and the sons of God shouted for joy." Angels accompanied those servants of the Most High, the ancient patriarchs, during the course of their pilgrimage. By angels was the law given on Sinai; by them were the armies of Israel directed, on their march through the wilderness, protected after their establishment in Canaan, and their enemies discomfited. By them was the Saviour proclaimed on the night in which he was born, comforted after his temptation, strengthened in his passion, testified of at his resurrection, attended at his ascension. They shall again attend him on his return to judgement, gather together his elect from the four winds, and celebrate his final triumph over our last enemy. "Even now there is "joy among them over one sinner that repenteth; and

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the apostle says concerning them, "Are they not "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to "them that shall be heirs of salvation?"

Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him, and causest him to be visited by celestial spirits? But, in the person of Christ, one far above all created spirits did not disdain to visit him; and the court of heaven is only attendant on its King: "Wherefore, "when he bringeth his first begotten into the world, "he saith, And let all the angels of God worship "him."

But—"are these things indeed so?" Do the holy angels take a decided part in our concerns? Let us, at length, take a part in them ourselves, and not continue wholly indifferent as to what we have been, what we are, and what we shall be. Some little time, surely, should be spent in the inquiry. Spirits above are active to save us; spirits below are active to destroy us; and we sleep, not to be awakened, perhaps, till it is too late.

At the creation of the world, did "the morning stars "sing together, and all the sons of God shout for "joy?" And do men forget to be thankful for it? In a fit of spleen, do they say, they have no reason to be thankful for it? In a fit of infidelity, do they deny both the creation and the Creator? Such men, alas! there are: shame on them—equal shame on those who have no more sense than to admire and encourage them. "Praise the Lord, all ye works of "his, in all places of his dominion;" and all ye sons of men, for whom those works were wrought: "praise

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"the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, "praise his holy name."

It is written, "When he bringeth his first begot-"ten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels "of God worship him:" and have we lived to hear persons, calling themselves Christians, with Bibles in their hands, telling us, they find themselves obliged in conscience to quit the church, because she is guilty of idolatry in now doing—what she always has done—in paying divine honours to her Lord and Saviour? Such men likewise there are; and they too have their admirers and followers. The more is the pity! But marvel not: "it is the last time."

To conclude—Are angels "ministering spirits, "sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of "salvation;" rejoicing when we do well, and, consequently, grieving when we do otherwise? Have they been, in effect, under every dispensation, the *guardians* of the people of God? Let us duly reverence and respect them as such. When we consider them as "encamping round about us, to deliver us," let us no longer fear the power of the enemy; since "they "that are with us are more than they that are with "them." When we reflect that they are witnesses of our actions, let us do nothing that may make us ashamed before them; nothing but what we would do if we saw them. When we remember that they are to give an account of us, upon a return to him who sent them, let us take care that they may give it with joy, and not with grief. Let not our conduct be such, as shall oblige them to quit their charge before the

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time. O terrible voice, that once heard at midnight in the temple at Jerusalem, foreboding its destruction—LET US GO HENCE! "Whoso defileth the "temple of God, him shall God destroy." Our bodies are such temples. May no unlawful desires, no irregular passions, ever so desecrate them, as that conscience shall ring in our ears the same dreadful sound; but may our heavenly friends and guardians continue with us to the end, to comfort us in our last sorrows, and support us in our expiring agonies; that, when breath shall forsake the body, the soul may be "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."

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DISCOURSE XXVI.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN HOLY PLACES.

1 Kings, viii. 27.

Will God indeed dwell on the earth?

The occasion of this numerous and solemn assembly calls upon us to consider well this question, and one which seems to have almost overwhelmed the vast and capacious mind of Solomon himself. "Will "God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the hea-"ven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; "how much less this house that I have builded?" Certainly, that which is without bounds cannot be comprehended within that which has bounds, whether large or small; and, therefore, in a strict and proper sense, "the Most High"—as St. Stephen, alluding to this very passage, asserts in the seventh chapter of the Acts—"the Most High dwelleth not in "temples made with hands." But it is no less certain, that there is a sense, agreeably to which it may be truly said, that the Most High *does* dwell in temples made with hands. For this same king Solomon, in the same prayer at the dedication of the temple, has the following words: "Jehovah said, that he would "dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built

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"thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee "to abide in for ever;" that is, during the old dispensation. And in one of the psalms, God is introduced as saying—"Jehovah hath chosen Sion; he "hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest "for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Accordingly we read, that "when the priests were "come out of the holy place, the cloud filled the "house of Jehovah, so that the priests could not "stand to minister because of the cloud; for the "glory of Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah." The Master took possession of his house, and for a time displaced even his own servants, to show that he did so. As if he had said, "The house which you "have designed for my worship I have designed for "your blessing; what you have dedicated, I have "accepted; what you have consecrated, I have hal-"lowed; I have taken it for the purpose you in-"tended." Or, to use the far more emphatical words of the sacred penman—"I have heard thy "prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made "before me; I have hallowed this house which thou "hast built to put my name there for ever, and "mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpe-"tually."

Thus, notwithstanding the iniquities of mankind, and his own purity, as well as incomprehensible majesty, has God been pleased to dwell indeed on earth, and to vouchsafe an especial manifestation of his presence in holy places dedicated to his name, and set apart for his worship. A house designed for that end is therefore styled *the house of God*, or place of

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his residence. The custom of consecrating such places has prevailed in all ages, and throughout all nations. It obtained among the worshippers of false gods; but they derived it, with many other religious rites and institutions, from the worshippers of the true God, among whom we find it in the earliest times. It may be neither unentertaining nor uninstructive to trace, in few words, the history of these holy places, as it stands recorded in the Scriptures of truth.

And here it deserves well to be considered, that, before houses were built, even in Paradise itself, which seems to have been throughout what may be called *holy ground*, God had yet a distinct place, a *holy of holies*, where in some peculiar manner he was wont to dwell. For our first parents, we are told, when they had offended, "hid themselves from *the presence of the Lord:*" an expression used afterwards to denote that manifestation of himself which God was pleased to make in his temple.

When Cain and Abel offered sacrifice, it was probably by divine appointment, and at a place, as well as a time, fixed upon for that purpose. It was offered, as we may reasonably suppose, before God, or to *the presence of Jehovah*, from whence, it is likely, descended the sacred fire, as it did under the law, to consume the sacrifice of Abel, and thereby testify its acceptance. The offering was burnt, that the offerer might be saved. The surety suffered, that the sinner might go free.

The patriarchs, we know, during their travels, wherever they came, built altars with their enclosures, and there "called on the name of Jehovah;" that

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Name, of which God said, when the temple was built, that he had "placed his Name there."

On the spot where Jacob was favoured with his prophetic dream or vision, where he saw the communication opened between earth and heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the mystic ladder, as in the fulness of time they were to be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of man,—on this hallowed spot he laid the first rudiments of a temple; he called the name of the place Bethel, that is, the house of God; for surely, said he, "this is none other but the house of God, and this "is the gate of heaven!" He set up a stone for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it, adding, "It shall be "God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I "will give the tenth unto thee." Here, then, you have not only a *church*, but a church *endowed*.

"When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house "of Jacob from among the strange people," they sojourned in the wilderness, travelling toward the land of promise. Their God and Saviour did not disdain to sojourn and travel with them. As they dwelt in tents, he was pleased to do the same. In conformity to his own express direction, as to the framing every part of it, within and without, a sacred tabernacle was constructed and furnished in a proper manner to receive the Divine Guest. Thus the tabernacle of God was with men, and Moses there conversed with his Maker, as a man converses with his friend. From the mountains of Moab, Balaam viewed the camp of the chosen people, disposed in exact and beauteous order; he beheld them abiding in their

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tents, according to their tribes, with the cloud resting upon the holy tabernacle in the midst of them. What wonder that, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, which came upon him, his thoughts should be carried back to the blissful bowers of Eden, and forward to the coming of the blessed Person who should restore them to the world?—"How goodly "are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O "Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as "gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lign "aloes, which Jehovah hath planted, and as cedar "trees beside the waters. I shall see him, but not "now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall "come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise "out of Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and "the shout of a king is among them. How shall I "curse whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall "I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? Surely, "there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is "there any divination against Israel."

As God vouchsafed to travel with his people in the tabernacle of Moses, so did it please him to rest with them in the temple of Solomon. The feast of the dedication of that temple afforded the most magnificent sight that ever was presented to the eyes of mortals. Imagine to yourselves a building, where scarce any thing appeared less valuable than silver and gold; a building, of which God himself condescended to be the architect, and which had therefore in the design and execution all the perfection that infinite wisdom could give it. Before this building think you see the nation of the Israelites assembled,

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encircling their king, seated upon an exalted throne of burnished brass, with all the ensigns of majesty and royalty; while, amidst the harmony of different kinds of instruments, with the acclamations of a whole people, joining in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving, the glory of Jehovah, or a body of light above the brightness of the sun, descends from heaven, and fills the temple! Imagination can hardly reach the amazing idea. But thus is the scene described by the sacred writer: "And it "came to pass, when the priests were come out of "the holy place; (for all the priests that were pre-"sent were sanctified, and did not then wait by "course: also the Levites which were the singers, "all of them being arrayed in white linen, having "cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the "east end of the altar, and with them an hundred "and twenty priests sounding with trumpets): "it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers "were as one, to make one sound to be heard in "praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they "lifted up their voice, with the trumpets, and cym-"bals, and instruments of music, and praised the "Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy en-"dureth for ever; that then the house was filled "with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that "the priests could not stand to minister, by reason "of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the "house of God. And when all the children of Is-"rael saw how the fire came down, and the glory of "Jehovah upon the house, they bowed themselves "with their faces to the ground upon the pavement,

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"and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his mercy endureth for "ever!"—Never, after this, let us entertain low notions of God, or of the house where his glory dwelleth.

And is he then, think you, less present with us than he was with Israel? Is the Christian church less favoured than the Jewish church was? Have we lost any thing by the incarnation of his Son? Surely not. Let us consider a little. When man had offended his Maker, "Will God indeed dwell "on earth?" was a question, which might well pose the deepest understanding. Some means must first be devised to reconcile him to the offender. Such means were devised; he himself had already devised them. God and man were to be united in Messiah, who should do away sin by the sacrifice of himself. This being foredetermined in the divine counsels, the communication between heaven and earth was restored, immediately after the fall, upon the strength of it: and if you ask, why God visited the sinful race of Adam, and took up his abode in a tabernacle and a temple, the proper answer is, He did it, because that, in the fulness of time, the "Word "was to be made flesh, and men were to behold his "glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the "Father, full of grace and truth." To that great event the divine appearances in old time looked forward. Accordingly, in the New Testament, we find the body of Christ styled, "the *true* taber-"nacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man:" and when the Jews were discoursing with our Lord

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concerning the then temple, and the time employed in building it, he made answer, alluding, and probably pointing, to his own body, "Destroy THIS "temple, and in three days I will raise it again."—Such being the reason of the connexion re-established between God and sinful men, and of his dwelling among them, can we possibly doubt of his dwelling in Christian churches, that have been consecrated to his service, ever since the planting that religion in the world, when Christians had liberty and ability to erect such churches? It may be said, we do not see him, as the Israelites did. But the *glory*, or body of *light* or *fire*, which the Israelites saw, was only a *sign* or *token* of his presence. "God is a Spirit, whom no man hath seen, or can "see." We do not see the souls of those who are now assembled to worship him; yet are they present. The holy angels may be present at this time, and God himself, we trust, is so by his Spirit. You know who has said, "Where two or three are ga-"thered together in my name, there am I in the "midst of them."

You will be pleased to favour me with your attention, while I press upon your minds two consequences which follow from this doctrine of the divine presence in holy places, viz. the mercies of God to man, and the duties of man to God.

The king makes the court. Wherever the King of glory comes, all heaven comes in his train: when he descendeth from on high, as when he ascended thither, "he giveth gifts unto men;" the blessings of eternity are showered around; "he openeth his

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"hand, and filleth all things living with plenteous-
"ness." In his dedication prayer, king Solomon, personating, as it should seem, the great Mediator, states before God the various wants and miseries of his people, requesting that to those who should pray *in* or *towards* that temple, they might be supplied and relieved; "that thine eyes may be open towards "this house night and day; and hearken thou to the "supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Is-"rael, when they shall pray towards this place: and "hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and when "thou hearest, forgive." Pardon for time past, and grace for time to come, comprehend, between them, the spiritual necessities of mankind; and both are supposed to have been justly and beautifully represented by the service and the furniture of the tabernacle and temple of old; the former by the acceptance of sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood, without which there is no remission; the latter by the table of show bread, the golden candlestick with its lamps, and the altar of incense, denoting the support of our spirits by the true Bread which cometh down from heaven, the instruction of our minds by the light of truth shining forth in the word of God, and the merits of a Redeemer ascending with the prayers of the faithful, to render them acceptable at the eternal throne. Under the new law, in like manner, at the baptismal font, and at the holy table, are exhibited and communicated the Spirit purifying and cleansing from sin, the body and blood of Christ strengthening and refreshing the souls of men. Such are the benefits (and what greater benefits can

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your hearts wish for, or your imaginations conceive?) to be obtained, through faith in these holy places, where God is pleased to meet us, and to bless us, if indeed we are disposed to receive the blessing, by turning every one of us from his iniquities.

The duties of man, in return for these mercies of God, are evident.

"Reverence my sanctuary."—Every thing which bears a relation to God, ought surely to be reverenced by man; the house, more especially, wherein he condescends to dwell. It is the temple which sanctifieth the gift. In order to this, a church should be built and fitted up, it should be maintained and preserved, in such a manner as by its appearance to excite and produce that reverence in every one who enters it; that so he may fall down on his knees and worship, checking himself, if at his entrance he has been guilty of any negligence or inattention, with the patriarch's reflection;—"Surely "God is in this place, and I knew it not! This "is the house of God, and this is the gate of "heaven!"

It may be said, "that God has been served, and "may be served, acceptably in any church, or with-"out any church." He may be served acceptably without a church, when it is not in our power to have one; and he may be served acceptably in a bad church, when it is not in our power to have a good one. The Saviour of men, in the day of his humiliation, did not disdain to be born in a stable; but they who love and honour him would not therefore invite him to come into one again. We expend

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much upon our own houses, to make them elegant as well as comfortable; should we grudge a little to render the house of God neat, and decent, and such as Christians may frequent, without endangering their health? It is true, that "whatever we "give to God, we give him of his own;" but one would not therefore give him the worst of his own. He is most honoured by the best; and let the best be his; who has a fairer claim to it? "We cannot "by our gifts profit the Almighty." But we may honour him, and profit ourselves; for while man is man, religion, like man, must have a body and a soul; it must be external as well as internal; and the two parts, in both cases, will ever have a mutual influence upon each other. The senses and the imagination must have a considerable share in public worship; and devotion will accordingly be depressed or heightened by the mean, sordid, and dispiriting, or the fair, splendid, and cheerful appearance of the objects around us. The effects produced respectively are like those we experience, on seeing the habitation of God above overcast with clouds and darkness, or beholding it, when the light of the sun is diffused over it by day, or when by night it is gilded with the softer glory of the moon, and studded with ten thousand stars. *You* must feel the truth of this observation, and rejoice as much as the Jews formerly mourned and wept, when in their minds they compared the old temple with the new one.

To a sanctuary thus exciting reverence by every thing in and about it, let due reverence be paid by all that approach it. Put off your shoes from off

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your feet, lay aside the defilement contracted by walking upon the earth; put off, as concerning the former conversation, the old man; wash you, make you clean; for the place whereon you stand is holy ground. Drive out the buyers and sellers; clear your hearts of all worldly cares and thoughts; for this house is the house of prayer: when you enter it, salute him that dwelleth therein, by a fervent ejaculation, and address yourselves, with attention and devotion, to his service. It is the presence-chamber of the great King. Jehovah is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.

But the best and most effectual way of reverencing the sanctuary is, by letting the effects of our behaviour when we are in it, appear to the world by our behaviour when we are out of it; by living and acting in the spirit of religion. "Holiness becom-"eth thine house for ever:" holy persons in holy places. "Without are dogs," and other unclean creatures. Angels visit churches, and men who do so should in temper and disposition resemble them. When the sons of God present themselves, the imagination is shocked at the idea of Satan also coming among them, of blasphemy and profaneness, impurity and malignity being found in the sanctuary; the abomination, which maketh desolate, standing in the holy place! "He that defileth the temple of "God, him shall God destroy;" and it is well if he be not provoked to forsake the temple.—O terrible sound of voices said to have been heard in the dead of the night by the priests ministering in

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the temple, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem—" Let us go hence !"

As the house of God therefore is new, let your faith and your devotion be renewed with it. You have invited him to dwell among you; be it your endeavour to detain him. He is your God and Father; you are his people and his children. Walk before him as the people of such a God; behave as the children of such a Father. Let the very sight of this holy place recall to your minds these relations, and the duties suggested by them, from day to day, from week to week, from year to year, from age to age. For the blessing is to you and yours. Want of proper accommodations in the church can no longer be pleaded as an excuse for the absence of yourselves or families. There will be room for all —"young men and maidens, old men and child-"ren"—all may praise the name of the Lord; all may offer up their prayers to him; all will be heard by him.

That the rising generation may be disposed and qualified to use these advantages, they must be instructed betimes in the first principles of religion. In many cases, the parents are not able themselves to instruct their children, or to be at the expense of having them instructed. Indeed if they were, means have hitherto been wanting to effect it, for want of a proper person to undertake the task, and a proper place in which to perform it. Both are now provided. An institution of this kind is about to be set on foot, and has met with a seasonable support by the judi-

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cious application of a benefaction, the produce of which, greatly increased since the time of the bequest, seems to have been intended for the very purpose. The design, however, cannot be carried into execution without that kind and generous assistance, which I am this day to ask at your hands, and which English hearts never suffer to be asked in vain.

Vice is the daughter of ignorance, and the mother of shame and pain, of misery and sorrow, temporal and eternal. To rescue the children of the poor from ignorance, is to save them from all its mournful consequences. Nor let any one apprehend they will know too much. They will be taught to know their Maker and themselves; to be contented with their station, and to perform the duties of it. Creatures made in the image of God, and redeemed by the blood of his Son, ought not to know less: and he who knows so much, will have no reason to regret, at the last day, that he did not know more. By contributing towards the fartherance of this pious and charitable undertaking, you do a work acceptable to God, who would have all to be saved, and, as the means of salvation, brought to a knowledge of the truth: you do a work acceptable to Christ, who, when he said, "Suffer little children to come "unto me, and forbid them not," said in the strongest manner, by implication, neglect no possible method of encouraging and assisting them to come: you do a work acceptable to your country, in furnishing it with so many useful members; in rendering those a blessing to it, who would otherwise have been its curse; nay, perhaps, in preserving it (if it can be

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preserved) by providing, that the succeeding generation shall be more virtuous than the present: you do a work in the highest degree honourable and advantageous to yourselves, because it is a work which will be acknowledged and rewarded by the world's Redeemer and its Judge, when all the stately and idle monuments of pride, vanity, and folly, shall sink into perdition, and the remembrance of them vanish for ever.

There is but one thing more of which you could wish to be assured, namely, that what is liberally given may be rightly applied. And of this, I think, you have sufficient security in the consideration of the person intrusted with the care of it, under whose direction, by the assistance chiefly of those his friends who compose the present illustrious assembly, this fair and goodly fabric, to the astonishment of all around it, hath been begun and completed within the space of a year; who esteems this day to be the happiest day of his life; who requesteth not others to do that which he would be himself unwilling to do; and who seems, through life, to have formed his conduct upon the maxim laid down by that great master of holy living, the excellent Bishop Jeremy Taylor—"The way for a man to be "a saver by his religion, is to deposit one part of "his fortune in the temple, and the other in the "hands of the poor."—That such a shepherd may long be continued a blessing to his flock, and that his flock may ever be sensible of the blessing, hear, O Lord, our supplications in heaven thy dwelling place, and, when thou hearest, grant them

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for the sake and through the merits of Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever, world without end. Amen.

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DISCOURSE XXVII.

SUBMISSION TO GOVERNNENT.

1 PETER, II. 13.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

RELIGION came down from heaven, and was designed to carry us thither. Its great object is, the everlasting happiness of man with his God in another and a better world. But it neglects not to provide for his comfort, by regulating his behaviour, in this. It labours to persuade him, that virtue best promotes his true interest in both; it has contrived, that he can advance towards the former, only by a performance of his duties in the latter.

His duties are many, springing from the various relations in which his Maker has been pleased to place him. No sooner is he born but he comes under the obligation of duty to his parents as a son, and to his governors as a subject. A state of nature is a state of society; and no society can subsist without government of some kind or other.

In this class of duties, as in all the rest, it is necessary that we should be instructed from time to time; and no time more proper for the purpose, than when we commemorate, as we do upon the an-

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niversary of this day, the accession of our sovereign to the throne of these kingdoms. In the course of the service for the day, certain portions of Scripture are selected with this view. The text is taken from that appointed for the Epistle, being part of the second chapter of the First Epistle of St. Peter, where that apostle delivers his injunctions fully and clearly. As St. Paul has written his sentiments in the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, by taking them into consideration, together with those of St. Peter, we shall find ample matter whereon to employ our thoughts; and "in the mouth of two "witnesses will every truth be established."

Obedience to government is by both apostles pressed upon all Christians. "Let every soul be "subject to the higher powers," or "powers that "are set over us;" these are St. Paul's words. St. Peter's are to the same effect—"Submit yourselves "to the king as supreme, and to rulers as those "that are sent by him;" as bearing his authority, and acting in his name, from whom power descends through all inferior and subordinate magistrates, down to the least and lowest. The streams are many, but the fountain is one.

The reasonableness of this apostolical precept is suggested by the terms used to convey it; for why "rulers and governors," unless it be indeed their office to rule and govern, our duty to submit and obey? If the governed are to govern the governors, from that moment there is an end of government: all is strife and confusion; a civil war will be the conse-

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quence, and the sword must determine who shall govern. If a state cannot settle itself, some neighbouring state will take the opportunity to invade it, and reduce it under a foreign yoke. So will its last condition be worse than its first; and, seeking liberty in an improper way, it will be sure to find slavery in the end.

But, secondly, that there should be government, and that men should obey it, is the will and appointment of God. Thus St. Paul; "There is no power "but of God:" and St. Peter, "Submit yourselves to "every ordinance of man," or, "every institution "of this sort among men, for the Lord's sake; it is "the will of God." "Ye must be subject not only for "wrath," or "for fear of punishment," adds St. Paul, "but also for conscience' sake;" that is, because you know in your hearts that God has enjoined you so to be, and that in obeying your governors you obey him.

Of government there have been different kinds among men in different ages and different countries. At the beginning, there were only the children of one man, living under the care of their father. These dispersed, and became heads of their own families respectively; or many families might agree to live under one chief, and make up little governments of tribes or clans. Then disputes arose, till one stronger than the rest subdued them, and forced them to unite under him. Thus arose the large governments, which likewise contended with each other, till at length one of them swallowed up the others, and became almost universal, giving place itself after a

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time to a superior power. In this way succeeded to each other, the empires of the Assyrians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans; out of which last, when overthrown and broken in pieces, sprang the empires and kingdoms at this day subsisting in the world.

Thus again as to *forms* of government; some nations are governed by one man, some by the principal nobility, some by a council of men chosen to represent the people. Our own is a happy mixture of all three, so contrived that the parts are a mutual check upon each other: and if there be at any time an error in one, it is corrected by the remaining two. Governments by assemblies of the people at large cannot be well carried on but in small districts, where the people are not too numerous, and can be conveniently called together. They have always been subject to frequent seditions and commotions; as may be seen in the histories of Greece and Rome.

The principle to be collected, from the texts above cited, is plainly this; that the law of God enjoins obedience to every government settled according to the constitution of the country in which it subsists; and that, even though the governor should be elected by the people; as in lesser matters, a man is free to choose that master into whose service he will enter; but when he is once entered, the Scriptures press upon him from thenceforth the several duties which a servant owes to his master. The members of a corporation choose one from among themselves for their annual magistrate: but when he is chosen, they

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are bound to show him the respect and obedience which are due to his office, while he continues in it. —Obedience, in short, is enjoined to the civil magistrate, under whatever form of government we happen to live; nor does that obedience extend to the relinquishing those rights which the citizen may legally claim. St. Paul himself, at Philippi, refuses to comply with the directions intimated by the magistrates, unless the magistrates themselves, by a mark of respect, will make him amends for the illegality of their proceedings in punishing him uncondemned: of the centurion who was standing near when he was about to be scourged, he demanded the privilege due to a Roman citizen: and when Festus proposed his trial to be held at Jerusalem, the apostle boldly made his appeal to Cæsar, as every Roman citizen might do. These claims of civil privileges do not indicate unconditional submission to power illegally exercised, but refer us, for the practice of our duty in particular cases, to the laws and constitution of our country[a].

A third reason assigned by our two apostles for obedience to government, is, the benefit derived from it to the community. It is instituted for the protection of good men, by the punishment of evil ones. Of these latter how many are there in the world? And how many more would there be, had we no laws, or, which is the same thing, no magistrate to execute them? Every man might act as his interest or his passions at the moment led him, and

[a] See Huntingford's Visitation Sermon, p. 30.

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no man's property or life would be secure for half an hour. The governor, doubtless, is a man, fallible and peccable; he may be deceived, or he may do wrong without being deceived: he beareth the sword, and he may strike with it improperly: but if, to remedy an occasional inconvenience of this sort, you dissolve government, what will be the consequence? Why, more mischief will be done by the people, thus let loose, in a month, than would have been done by the governor in half a century. If all men were perfectly wise, and perfectly good, and able to govern themselves, there might be no need of any to govern them; but till that time shall come, and in the present state of human nature, it may be said of too many of our own species, as it is said of some other creatures in the book of Psalms, "Their mouths must be "held with bit and bridle, lest they fall upon thee." And therefore so it has been from the beginning: the bridle has been holden, sometimes by one and sometimes by another; but there always has been a bridle, and always a person to hold it: nor, perhaps, does any man living know any other man than himself, whom he thinks fit to be trusted with the absolute and unbounded liberty of doing what he pleased.

A fourth reason given by St. Peter for the precept inculcated, is, the honour of Christianity.—"So is "the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put "to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Christianity being a new sect, rising in opposition to the idolatrous religion of the Roman empire, its enemies

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took occasion to represent it as dangerous to government; the apostle therefore is the more earnest to wipe off this aspersion. He assures the world, that Christians were men not factious and turbulent, but quiet and peaceful, minding their own business, and knowing nothing more of politics than to obey their governors, and to pray for them: it being a principle with them to do this from conscience, notwithstanding any difference of religion between themselves and the Heathens; and to suffer, rather than to rebel. "The ignorance of foolish men" was thus "put to silence;" it was shown that they had made the objection against Christianity, not knowing what it was, and totally mistook the nature of it, since it commanded subjection not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: "for," proceeds the apostle, "this is thankworthy, if a man for "conscience towards God endure grief, suffering "wrongfully. For what glory is it if when ye be "buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? "But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take "it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even "hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suf-"fered for us, leaving us an example that ye should "follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile "found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, "reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened "not, but committed himself to him who judgeth "righteously." This example of our blessed Lord was carefully followed by the apostles and first Christians. The sentiments of our own church are sufficiently declared by the appointment of the Scrip-

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ture which we have been considering, as the Epistle for the day.

Cases, doubtless, may arise, in which this duty will seem hard to practise.

As to the duty being hard to practise, many others are equally so. Is it not hard that, in some circumstances, we must give up houses and lands, father, wife, children, yea, and one's own life too, so as not to seek to save it by going one step out of the rule of the Gospel? And is it not hard that he who thus saves his life in time, should lose it in eternity? Flesh and blood will complain; and Christ loses many disciples, who forsake and walk no more with him because of these hard sayings. What then is to be done? Must we bring down the laws of God to comply with flesh and blood; or must we not rather, through divine grace, exalt flesh and blood, to comply with the laws of God? The religion, like the character of our Lord, is one of suffering and self-denial; he who has determined against these, may as well wipe off from his forehead, at once, the *cross* with which it was signed at his baptism.

You will say, the doctrine is unreasonable, and of tyranny there can be no end, if it be unlawful to resist it.

Perhaps, if we only lay aside for a moment our passions and prejudices, we shall see how much better God has provided for our happiness than we ourselves should do, in commanding obedience to our governors, though at any time they happen not to be so good as we could wish them to be.

For, first, if you allow to subjects a power of

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taking arms, and deposing their princes, *who is to be judge* when there is a sufficient reason for exerting such power? Men will never judge fairly and impartially in their own cause. The best writers on this side of the question allow, that nothing less can justify it, than "a total subversion of the constitu-"tion." But if they wait till this is effected, it will be too late: and if they are to begin before, how often will they be deluded by artful and designing men, who will exclaim, that a total subversion of the constitution is intended, whenever the demands of themselves and their friends are not satisfied, or their plans adopted and pursued! While the administration of government is in the hands of men, errors must be committed: factious spirits will never be wanting to aggravate and represent them as much worse than they really are, to alarm the people with jealousies and surmises, and blow the trumpet of sedition and rebellion through the land. How soon the people are seduced, and how little dependence can be placed on their voice, may be learned from the behaviour of the Jews to the Son of God, whom the multitude on one day ushered into his capital with acclamations and hosannas; and within a week, nothing was heard in the streets of that same capital, but "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, "crucify him!"

2. It should be considered, that although government may sometimes be bad, rebellion will generally be worse. "The wrath of a king," says the Scripture, "is as the roaring of a lion;" he may destroy some: but "the madness of the people" is as the

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raging of a tempestuous sea, when it has burst its bounds; it overwhelms all. Compare the mischief said to be done, or designed, by our unfortunate Charles I. with the bloodshed and murder, the ravages and devastations of the *Great Rebellion;* from the horrors and miseries of which the nation was at length obliged to seek deliverance and protection by re-establishing the government that had been cast off. Whether the tumults and commotions that now distract a neighbouring country will not end in like manner, time must discover.

A warning, however, and a very salutary one, is suggested to princes by the sight or the history of such events. Obedience to government is the Scripture doctrine, and the ministers of religion are bound to preach it; by preaching it they may do much good, and can do no harm. But though they preach it, and the people receive it, ever so heartily and affectionately, let not governors presume upon that circumstance so far as to abuse their power, and treat their subjects otherwise than they ought to be treated, that is, as a shepherd treats his flock, and a father his children. For, when driven to extremities, men will not always act according to their principles. *Oppression will make a wise man mad;* and that ruler is very far from a wise man who ventures upon the experiment.

3. But respecting the principle of obedience, and the inconveniences to which it may sometimes subject us, we do not sufficiently rely upon the providence or the promises of God. The Scriptures teach us that, as he setteth a righteous prince over a

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people that fear and serve him, so he often sendeth an unrighteous one to punish a wicked nation. In Job it is said, that "God maketh a wicked man to "reign, for the sins of the people;" and in Hosea, that "he giveth a prince," meaning an evil one, "in "his anger; and taketh away a prince," that is, a good one, "in his displeasure." When, therefore, we have a good prince, let us by our obedience move God to continue him; when we have one of another character, let us repent of those sins which provoked him to set such an one over us, and he will deliver us as he sees fit, either by taking him away or changing his heart; for, "the king's heart is in the hand "of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it "whithersoever he will."—In one word, let us either deserve good governors, or bear with such as we deserve.

Happy are we of this nation (did we but know our own happiness!) in possessing a constitution so framed by the wisdom of ages, as almost to preclude the necessity of nice questions and disputes upon this topic. In an empire extended like ours, government cannot be conducted by an assembly of the people at large, but they are free to choose the persons by whom they will be represented in the great council of the nation; and if these do not give satisfaction, they are free, at certain constantly returning periods, to change them for others. In this council of representatives most laws originate; without their consent none can be enacted; nor can any be enacted till they have been re-considered and discussed in another assembly of the nobility, men of

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the first families and fortunes in the country, men liberally educated, men of reading and experience. To acts thus framed by one set of men, matured, revised, and, if need be, corrected by another, every kind of information being first called in by both, is requisite the consent of the prince. And even, after all, if when promulgated and carried into execution, a law has been found productive of unforeseen inconveniences and hardships to any particular class of subjects, upon petitions being duly preferred to the legislature, it has been taken afresh into consideration, altered, and amended. It seems impossible for imagination itself to conceive a form of government better calculated to answer every good purpose. The subject has all the liberty he can have, consistently with the very being of society; while, to the ease and comfort of the prince, as well as the security of his people, his power is so defined and settled, that he can do no wrong, but "by and with "the consent and advice of both houses of parlia-"ment." This constitution has long been the glory of Britain, and the envy of most nations around us; nay, the people nearest in situation to us, with whom the solicitude of an Englishman for it was a constant subject of ridicule, have undergone such an astonishing inversion of national character, that they are fainting and languishing for something like it, and have thrown their country into convulsions to obtain it. From an eminence, the firm and solid shore, we behold the storm raging below, with the satisfaction of reflecting, that we neither raised it, nor wish to take any advantage of it.

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At the head of our constitution, we may say without flattery, appears a king, whose first principle it is to fear God, and his first wish that all his subjects might do the same, and experience that support from above, under all their trials and afflictions, which he has experienced under all his own; and, in time, that deliverance from them.

A cloud suddenly appeared in the horizon, soon overspread the face of the sky, and obscured the source of light and motion in our political system. Directed whither to have recourse for assistance, the intercessory prayer of a whole people ascended to the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, the sure refuge of all who call upon him in the time of trouble.—The prayer was heard—the cloud passed; the day returned; the King was seen rejoicing in thy strength, O Lord; and a nation, revived from the dead, again walking in the light of thy countenance; joy and gladness were heard in our land, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Thousands and ten thousands hailed the restoration of their sovereign to them with tears of gratitude, confessing they never knew before how dear he was to them.

May this great blessing never fall from our remembrance; and may no future offences and transgressions of ours prevent it from being permanent; may gladness in our hearts produce righteousness in our lives, and mercy melt those whom judgement could not soften; may the goodness of God answer the end which it is always intended to answer, that of leading us to repentance, through

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faith unfeigned, and love unbounded, to those blissful regions, where shall be no more death, neither crying nor pain, but earthly sorrow shall end in heavenly joy, and a temporal cross be succeeded by an eternal crown!

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DISCOURSE XXVIII.

THE CHRISTIAN KING.

1 Peter, ii. 21.

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.

When the angels beheld the dark and disordered state of created nature upon its first production, they were, doubtless, thrown into some perplexity to conceive how it should ever be made a means of manifesting forth the glory of the Creator. But when they saw the light spring up, at the divine command, from that blackness of darkness, and fix its residence in its tabernacle the sun, illuminating and adorning the firmament of heaven with its glorious show, and the earth, with its beautiful furniture, all formed out of rudeness and confusion; then they confessed that the difficulty of the work served only to display the skill of the Workmaster, which is proportionably estimated by the unpromising nature of the materials.

In like manner, whoever views the chaos to which the infinite wisdom of a presiding Providence sometimes permits the moral world to be reduced, by the prevailing power of the prince of darkness and the

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agency of his instruments, will scarce be able, at first, to discern any traces of the divine counsels in a mirror so sullied and clouded over by the enormities of sinful men. Yet let him wait with patience for a little season, and those clouds shall pass away; a light shall shine, and some great end present itself to sight, so worthy of God, so beneficial to man, that standing amazed at a power able to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, he will be forced to cry out concerning the œconomy of the spiritual system, as David did concerning the operations of the natural—"O Lord, how manifold "are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them "all"[a].

What a gloomy and comfortless scene to the eye of flesh was exhibited in Judea, when the pure and innocent Jesus, forsaken by all his disciples, was delivered up into the hands of wicked men, to end a life of righteousness and mercy by a death of pain and shame! Certainly that was the hour of the ungodly, and the power of darkness. But in that very hour was God glorified, and the world redeemed. And while the Egyptians look upon a cloud which they cannot see through, Israel beholds in the same column a bright and shining light, directing and conducting them to the land of promise.

And as nothing that was ever transacted upon the theatre of this world brought so much glory to God on high as the passion of the Messiah, so next to that, because the nearest resemblance of it, precious

[a] Psal. civ. 24.

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and most honourable in his sight is the death of his saints. St. John "heard a voice from heaven," enjoining him to write, and declare to the world, that "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord[b]." More blessed, surely, are they that die not only *in him*, but *for him* and lay down their lives in a good and righteous cause. And though in the eyes of men the church might appear more amiable when, exulting in the favour of Constantine, she wore the white garments of joy and festivity, and carried the palm of victory and triumph in her hand, yet we know that she was never dearer to God, because never more conformed to the image of his Son, than just before that period of time, when, persecuted by the fury of Dioclesian, she was seen arrayed in the scarlet robe of martyrdom, and bore her cross after Jesus. Prosperity in this world, besides that it is an argument which will conclude for and against every cause and party in their turns, can never be the badge of his disciples who came into the world in a stable, among the beasts that perish, and went out of it upon a cross numbered with malefactors: and whoever makes this the criterion of the divine favour, must condemn the generation of God's children, from righteous Abel to the blessed martyr of this day; upon whose unparalleled murder though we cannot reflect but with horror and astonishment, yet most gratefully are we ever bound to commemorate the glories of God's grace, which he made the villany of the most abandoned miscreants an occasion of calling

[b] Rev. xiv. 13.

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forth and displaying to mankind in the person of his anointed, enabled thereby so steadfastly to look unto and so closely to copy after his Master and Saviour, who "left him an example, that he should follow "his steps"—And he followed them unto the end.

But as exceptions have been taken at discourses on this day's occasion, as well as at some parts of the church service appointed for it, on account of their instituting what have been called *impious comparisons* between our Lord and the royal martyr, it will not be amiss, before we proceed, to obviate that objection. Some considerations therefore shall be laid before you, to evince that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is set forth to us in the holy Scriptures as an *example* which we are to *follow;* and, consequently, that every Christian, so far as he does follow that example, and lives and dies in the spirit of his Master, is so far *conformed*, or *made like* unto him; by which it will appear, that as the royal martyr did eminently follow this example of Christ, and so was eminently conformed and made like unto him, there can be no *impiety* in comparing him with his blessed Master.

Our Lord then, let it be observed, was, as our church well expresses it in one of her collects, "both "a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly "life[c]." By his sacrifice he procured us grace to follow his example, which otherwise had been proposed to us in vain; by his example he showed us how to make a right use of that grace, which unless

[c] Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter.

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we do, it is given in vain. So that if he who regards him as an example, and not as a Redeemer, will be lost because he *cannot* follow him; he who takes him for a Redeemer, and not for an example, will be lost because he *does* not follow him; since redemption was in order to holiness: and although it be most certain that without Christ no man can attain unto holiness, yet it is no less certain, that "without "holiness no man shall see the Lord." He only is fully and effectually redeemed, and has evidence to assure him of it, who bears stamped on his soul the image and superscription of his Saviour. Considered indeed as the Redeemer of the world, Christ stands single and unapproachable, as the sun in the heavens. "He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people "there were none with him[d];" "for no man can by "any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God "a ransom for him[e]." When therefore he bids us learn of him, the lesson proposed is not to cleanse the lepers or to raise the dead, to create or to redeem; but to be like him in all his holy and heavenly tempers and dispositions—"Learn of me, "for I am meek and lowly of heart[f]." So far then are we from being guilty of any impiety, when we point out a similitude between Christ and his faithful servants, that perhaps we could not give a more just and adequate definition of the religion we profess, than if we were to say, "It consists in the imitation "of him as man, the first born among many breth-

[d] Isa. lxiii. 3. [e] Psal. xlix. 7. [f] Matt. xi. 29.

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"ren, whom we adore as God, the Saviour of the "world."

Nor indeed can any one fail to see that the life of Christ was designed as a pattern for his followers, who considers how admirably it is calculated for that purpose. We meet not here with legendary tales of romantic austerities, ecstasies, and abstractions, tending only to amaze and embarrass the consciences of men with unprofitable and unnecessary scruples; but we behold a life which, though holy and without spot or blemish from beginning to end, was conducted after the manner of men, and so as to be imitable by them; being passed in the midst of civil society, and in the exercise of all those lovely graces by which that is preserved and improved, sweetened and sanctified. "The glories of the life of Jesus," says one who studied it thoroughly, "were so great, "that the most early and constant industry must "confess its own imperfection; and yet was it so "sweet and humane, that the greatest infirmity, if "pious, shall find comfort and encouragement. "Thus God gave his children manna from heaven; "and though it was excellent like the food of angels, "yet it conformed to every palate, according to that "appetite produced by their several constitutions[g]." And should we not find it the best compendium of morality, the most perfect and unerring rule whereby to direct ourselves in all cases, if we would only ask our own hearts, before we enter upon an action, how

[g] Exhortation to the imitation of the life of Christ, in Bishop Taylor's Great Exemplar, sect. 8.

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the blessed Jesus would behave in our circumstances? A conscience but moderately informed from the Gospel would seldom, perhaps, give a wrong determination. But the truth is, we are afraid of the answer, and therefore dare not ask the question.

Such, then, being the life of Christ, what wonder that all men should be so frequently called to an imitation of it, as we find they are in the Holy Scriptures? The apostle, Rom. viii. 29. asserts, that our conformity to Christ was the great end and design of the divine counsels concerning us: "Whom he "did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be con-"formed to the image of his Son." Accordingly, the initiatory sacrament of baptism, as our church from the Scriptures informs us, "doth represent "unto us our profession, which is to *follow the* "*example* of our Saviour Christ, and be made *like* "*unto him.*" And therefore we are continually reminded and exhorted to hold fast, to live conformably to, this our profession. "He that saith he "abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even "as he walked[h]." Thus only can we be delivered from all blindness of heart, and brought to a knowledge of the truth. For—"He that followeth me, saith he, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have "the light of life[i]." St. Paul propounds his own example to the Corinthians, because it was a copy of Christ's—"Be ye followers of me, even as I am "of Christ[k]." To such only is the reward promised

[h] 1 John, ii. 6. [i] John, viii. 12. [k] 1 Cor. xi. 1.

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—"Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, "when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of "his glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel[l]." And, lastly, the character given of the Israel of God by the well beloved John is—"These are they which follow the "Lamb whithersoever he goeth[m]."

And if we consider what the path was in which the Lamb of God went before us, we shall see in what respect we are more especially commanded to follow him, viz. in suffering with meekness and resignation; which, indeed, is the particular alluded to in the text. The apostle is enforcing the duty of bearing chastisement patiently, "when we do well "and suffer for it," from a consideration of its being the nature of our profession, which he proves from the suffering of its great Author, and the example he afforded us in the things which he endured: "For "even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye "should follow his steps." The Christian profession therefore being a state of suffering in this life, and the patience of Christ under all his sufferings designed as a pattern to us under all ours, it follows, that every Christian who suffers patiently on this principle is conformed or made like unto Christ in this respect, as our Lord says all his disciples must be—"Whosoever will be my disciple, let him deny him-"self, and take up his cross daily, and follow me[n]." And the apostle speaks of the sufferings of himself

[l] Matt. xix. 28. [m] Rev. xiv. 4. [n] Luke, ix. 23.

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and his fellow-labourers in this light, with a depth and energy of expression altogether inimitable—"Always," says he, "bearing about in the body the "dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of "Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For "we which live are always delivered unto death for "Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be "made manifest in our mortal flesh*." It was therefore our martyr's duty, and his enemies took care he should not want an opportunity of practising it—it was, I say, our martyr's duty, to be LIKE his Lord and Master; and they who object to the truth of this, are ignorant of their own duty, and of the Christian character, which is all a copying after the perfect original of Christ, from the mortification of the old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and passions, which answers to his sufferings and crucifixion, to the entire renewal of the whole man in righteousness and true holiness, after his blessed image, which answers to his resurrection.

But why should it be thought a thing incredible, that the character of a Christian king should bear a resemblance to Christ since his coming in the flesh, when we all know that the characters of some of the kings of Israel bore so near a resemblance, that they had the honour to prefigure him before his coming? In the Psalms are described to us, by the very same words, the sufferings of David and those of the Son of David; the glory of Solomon, and that of the Prince of Peace. If, therefore, many passages

* 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.

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allowed to be prophetically descriptive of the Messiah were at first spoken of a temporal prince, where can be the impropriety of applying them to another temporal prince, in the same or like circumstances with him of whom they were originally uttered? This consideration, it is humbly presumed, fully justifies the use which is made of some texts of this sort in the hymn appointed to be used upon this day instead of the *Venite exultemus:* since, however strongly characteristical they are of our Lord, yet are they not so absolutely appropriated to him, but that they were once true, in the letter, of a king of Israel, and therefore may with innocence and propriety be transferred from him to a king of England, who, had he too been a king of Israel in old time, had been as eminent and distinguished a forerunner of Christ, as he was a follower of him.

Nor let us wonder when we find the lives, and actions, and sufferings of all the saints, from the beginning to the end of the world, bearing such an analogy to those of Christ and of each other. For it cannot possibly, in the nature of things, be otherwise; seeing they all walk by the same way to the same end, and it is one and the self-same Spirit that lives and rules in their hearts, forming and fashioning them to one and the same model of devotion and piety, temperance and chastity, humility and meekness, patience and resignation, faith and charity, righteousness and holiness. And there is an analogy also, for the same cause, between the lives and actions of the children of disobedience in all ages and nations, as the same spirit worketh in them all,

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and the same part is acted, be the actor's name Cain, Korah, or Cromwell.

All these things therefore duly weighed, viz. that Christ was not only a sacrifice for sin, but also an ensample of godly life; that his life was in the most admirable manner calculated for the imitation of all mankind; that all are continually called to an imitation of it, particularly in the article of suffering patiently; that many kings, as well as priests and prophets, of old, had the honour to prefigure it, and, consequently, that kings in after ages may copy it; and lastly, that all the holy persons must of necessity be like *their* Master and each other, for the same reason that the children of disobedience are so; we may now proceed, it is hoped, without offence, to take a view of the blessed martyr, as a follower of his Lord, or, in other words, as a true disciple of the holy Jesus, as living the life and dying the death of a Christian king.

And, indeed, when we behold that constellation of graces, both active and passive, which shone forth in the character of this excellent prince, we should be at a loss where to begin, but that he himself has left us a direction, in that advice to his son, drawn from his own practice—"With God I will have you begin "and end[p]." In all things, at all times, and all seasons, his rule was, to "seek first the kingdom of "God, and his righteousness." Religion had taken possession of his heart, and impregnated with its benign and salutary influences all the streams that pro-

[p] Eikon, sect. 27.

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ceeded from that fountain of life. Piety, too generally banished from among the attendants upon princes, as fit only for the cell and the cloister, was shown to be not incompatible with the pleasures of a court and the cares of a crown; but seemed then to be in its proper province, when employed in moderating the former by its wholesome discipline, and alleviating the latter by its celestial comforts. Certain it is, that neither the one nor the other could hinder the king from "kneeling upon his knees," like the greatly beloved Daniel in the court of Babylon, at the appointed seasons, "and praying and giving "thanks before his God[q];" nor could any message, however afflictive or alarming, engage his attention for a single moment, till that blessed work was finished. His soul, like the royal bird, borne upwards on the strong and well-poised pinions of a devotion as manly as it was ardent, and having the eyes of her faith fixed on the glories of the Sun of Righteousness, left the world and all things in it behind her, till her return. What a noble sight is Christianity seated upon a throne! From such an eminence how does the fair light of a good example diffuse itself far and wide through all the regions of the surrounding darkness, to warm the frozen sons of ignorance and indevotion! And how will such an example of a prince, encumbered with the concerns of a whole kingdom, and yet finding time for a constant attendance on all his religious exercises, and suffering nothing to interrupt him in them—how will

[q] Dan. vi. 10.

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it in the day of judgement condemn a careless, ungodly sort of people, who neglect the service of God when they have any thing else to do, and—when they have nothing else to do!

He who is accustomed to the spiritual delights of prayer, the joys of thanksgiving, and the felicities of a good conscience, soon comes, in the same degree as he relishes them, to loathe the sinful pleasures of sensuality. We are the less surprised, therefore, after beholding the unfeigned piety of this prince, to find him living amidst all the temptations of sense, heightened and set off to the utmost, with the strict temperance of an ascetic, and holding forth to all ages and generations a rare example of purity and conjugal fidelity; his very thoughts being so entirely brought into subjection to the ruling principle within him, that they were not suffered to wander beyond the divinely appointed limits, to strange and forbidden objects[r]. And with regard to the irascible passions, his soul partook of the nature of those superior regions whither she so often resorted, where the storms and tempests that disturb the peace of this lower world are not known, and no spirit is stirring but that of universal love.

If we trace this love in its emanations to all about him, what must we think of that meeting of the king and his royal offspring after some years' absence, the sight of which moved the heart of Cromwell himself to compassionate and applaud the unfortunate mon-

[r] Princess Elizabeth's relation subjoined to the Eikon.

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arch whose blood he thirsted after, and with which he was shortly to satiate himself. In what abundance the same benignity streamed forth towards his faithful servants, we may judge by this remarkable circumstance, that when some of them appeared in his presence with the usual tokens of sorrow for their relations lately slain in his service, "he paid his "friends," says one of the historians, "a tribute which "none of his own unparalleled misfortunes ever "extorted from him—he dissolved into a flood of "tears[s]." And when we consider what sort of enemies he had, and yet how mild and gracious he showed himself in all his dealings with them, which they took care to repay as such men always do, we cannot but be much surprised to see, in one of the latest discourses published upon this occasion, the epithet of *unforgiving*[t] applied to him, and find ourselves in a manner irresistibly compelled to suppose it an error of the press.

For, surely none of his subjects, however distant from his person, were out of the sphere of his affection. He loved them all: his care for their bodies was exceeded only by his concern for their souls; and esteeming the church of England their best and safest guide through all the difficulties and dangers of this world to the glories of the next, he therefore loved her with an exceeding great and tender love. But hear his own words—"God's glory and the

[s] Hume, p. 457.

[t] The Lord Bishop of Gloucester's sermon preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords, Jan. 30, 1760, p. 12.

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"church's good I think myself so much the more "bound in conscience to attend with the most judi-"cious zeal and care, by how much I esteem the "church above the state, the glory of Christ above "mine own, and the salvation of men's souls above "the preservation of their bodies and estates[u]." This most Christian king regarded the church as the spouse of Christ, for whom he disdained not to shed his most precious blood, and the church of England as that portion of this church of which himself was appointed the guardian and protector. It was not through church bigotry or pious prejudice that he was firmly attached to her constitution, but from a full and thorough conviction of its rectitude and conformity to the apostolical model, as "keeping the "middle way," I use his own words, "between the "pomp of superstitious tyranny, and the meanness "of fantastic anarchy[w]." The former of these, decked in gorgeous array, had spread forth all her charms to allure him when abroad in the early days of youth; the latter endeavoured to dispute and terrify him into a compliance, while he was a prisoner in his own kingdom. But both attempts were alike fruitless and impotent. He returned from Spain, confirmed in his good opinion of the English church, by having viewed the corruptions of the Roman, an effect which is not always seen in those who go to view them; and vanquished the mighty champion of presbytery in the day of his affliction, and in the land of his captivity; as the still extant papers

[u] Eikon, sect. 13. [w] Eikon, sect. 27.

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relating that contest abundantly testify. Not to mention, that in the treaty of Newport, during the transactions of two months, in which religion bore so large a share, he alone, now grown gray, more in sorrows than years, "sustained the argu-"ment against fifteen men of the greatest parts and "capacities of both houses, and no advantage was "ever obtained over him," but all stood amazed, we are told by one of his latest historians, at "his "quick conception, cultivated understanding, chaste "elocution, and dignified manner[x]." How greatly is it to be lamented, that a prince thus qualified to adorn the church by his life, and defend her by his writings, should find himself disabled by his own subjects from testifying his love in any other way than by dying for her! If any thing could be fancied to exceed this their enormity, it must be a supposition, were such a supposition possible, that this noble attachment to the church should be sneered at by a churchman of that high order for whose preservation he resisted even unto blood.

With regard to the transactions of state, a preacher must not commence historian nor politician. Suffice it therefore to recommend to your candid and impartial consideration the following matters of fact: that England never was a more happy and flourishing kingdom, than in the former part of this monarch's reign[y]; that one of the most furious of the repub-

[x] Hume, p. 451.

[y] Clarendon, Carte, Hume, and the histories in general.

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lican party said after his death, that—"if they "desired a king, the last was as proper as any gen- "tleman in England[z]:" that he was libelled before he was crowned[a]: that the first parliament he called refused him the supplies requisite for the carrying on a war entered into by his father at their importunate solicitation, and thereby distressed him to the utmost[b]: that the ancient laws of the kingdom, as well as the precedents of his predecessors, set the prerogative of the crown much higher than we are now taught to conceive of it, and seemed to warrant him in the measures he was necessitated to take for the procuring a supply[c]: that it is by no means fair to form a judgement of practices in one age by principles which happened to prevail in another: that the king, however, quitted all his claims which had been charged with illegality, and passed more acts of grace than ever were passed in one reign; not only repairing the breaches he was supposed to have made in the constitution, but erecting new ramparts for its future security: that his adversaries made no other use of his concessions but to rise in their demands, till at length, the proper season for it being arrived, they spoke out, and refused to be content with any thing less than the abolition of episcopacy, and to have the power of the militia vested in their hands: that they seized his majesty's forts and garrisons, his fleet and army: that the king's total unpreparedness

[z] Hume, p. 471.
[a] Carte, p. 135.
[b] Carte, p. 140; Hume, p. 144.
[c] Hume, passim.

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for war showed how little he intended it[d]: that he sent to the two houses, at different times, before as well as after his imprisonment, forty messages for peace[e]; and, in order to the obtaining it, made more concessions than he could justify, and such as he afterwards bewailed with the sorrows of a most sincere and bitter repentance[f]: and lastly, that to prove himself to have been by no means the author of that desolating war, he appealed, upon the scaffold, to the respective dates of his own and the parliamentary commissions for levying troops[g]. Whoever shall reflect upon all these particulars, will find himself obliged to draw from thence two conclusions; first, that the king was perfectly innocent of the war, and all its dismal consequences: secondly, that the leaders of the faction had formed a plan, which they were determined not to rest till they had carried into execution, for the total overthrow of the constitution in church and state, and the introduction of a presbyterian republic in its room; for the effecting which they were always upon the watch, ready to make their advantage with the people, prepared for their purpose by seditious pamphlets and enthusiastic sermons, of every hasty and precipitate measure into which they could trepan or force their sovereign. Such appears plainly and undeniably to have been the scheme projected and invariably pursued by the heads of that party which was formed by what has

[d] Eikon, sect. 19.

[e] Printed in the Reliquiæ Carolinæ.

[f] See his prayer and confession subjoined to the Eikon.

[g] See his last speech as given by the historians.

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been lately called a coalition of PATRIOTS and PURITANS, but what may, perhaps, be more properly styled a combination of REBELS and SCHISMATICS, or rather of REBELLIOUS SCHISMATICS, both principles being duly mixed and thoroughly incorporated into the constitutions of the parliamentary leaders[h]. "And if," says a very acute and sagacious writer, and one who is far from being a friend to monarchical principles, upon an ample survey of the transactions of those times, and the circumstances the king was in, "if his political prudence was insuffi-"cient to extricate him from so perilous a situation, "he may be excused; since, even after the event, "when it is commonly easy to correct all errors, one "is at a loss to determine what conduct, in his "circumstances, could have maintained the author-"ity of the crown, and preserved the peace of the "nation. Exposed to the assaults of furious, im-"placable, and bigoted factions, it was never per-"mitted him, without the most fatal consequences, "to commit the smallest mistake; a condition too "rigorous to be imposed on the greatest human "capacity[i]." In a word, then, we may conclude, that had this prince lived in better times, and reigned over a people uninfected with the insinuating, inflating, and souring leaven of fanaticism, he had been the delight of mankind, and his kingdom the joy of the whole earth.

But so had God ordained, that he was to be eminent in another way, and to be "made perfect

[h] See Hume, p. 146. [i] Hume, p. 469.

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"through sufferings," like his blessed Master, of whose passion, and behaviour under it, he certainly held forth the most lively portraiture that ever was drawn in the fainter colours of mere humanity. Therefore it pleased the Almighty to cast this choice and most precious piece of royal gold into the burning fiery furnace of adversity, where he is universally allowed to have shone to the last with unrivalled and undiminished lustre. The same Divine Person, who came down to the three children in the Babylonian furnace, evidenced his presence with this his faithful servant in all his afflictions, by that uniform equanimity, that absolute resignation, that invincible patience, that winning meekness of love, by which he is said to have gained as many hearts as he conversed with persons. Men thought they could never sufficiently admire the unaffected ease and cheerfulness with which he descended from his regal dignities, and passed through all the various scenes of his pitiable calamities, the heaviest of which seem never to have excited any emotion in his mind, but that of compassion for his infatuated persecutors. It was observed particularly by his curious and prying attendants, that the letter which brought him the first news of his being sold by the Scotch to his implacable enemies in England, produced not the least alteration in his countenance[k]; being only "sorry," as himself expresses it, "that *they* should "do it, and that his price should be so much above "his Saviour's[l]." Confined to the frightful solitude

[k] Hume, p. 422.

[l] Eikon, sect. 23.

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of a prison, from which, so great was his sense of honour and probity, he would not escape when it was in his power, because he had given his word to the parliament, although he knew certain death was the consequence—confined, I say, to the frightful solitude of a prison, and cut off from all intercourse with earth, being denied the attendance of his very chaplains to minister to him in his spiritual necessities, he kept the communication with Heaven still open, and from thence received supplies the more abundant for his exclusion from the ordinary means of grace. Here he experienced the benefit of having been conversant in the Scriptures in the days of vigour and prosperity, when he walked in the garden of God; and from the divine precepts and promises, which are the flowers of that garden, extracted those lessons of eternal wisdom, which proved his support and consolation when the dark and stormy winter of adversity set in upon him; and which will ever continue to afford both instruction and comfort to the afflicted soul that shall make her abode in his inimitable meditations—a book inferior only to the sacred writings, and which it were much to be wished were the companion of every son and daughter of the church of England. A writer who cannot be suspected of any partiality on the side of the king's religion, yet speaking of his amiable deportment during his imprisonment, bears this testimony to its power in him—"The great source, whence the king "derived consolation amidst all his calamities, was "undoubtedly religion;" let us be permitted to add, it was the Christian religion, as professed in the

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church of England; "a principle which, in him, "seems to have contained nothing fierce nor gloomy, "nothing which enraged him against his adversaries, "or terrified him with the dismal prospect of futurity. "While every thing around him bore a hostile "aspect; while friends, family, relations, whom he "passionately loved, were placed at a distance, and "impotent to serve him; he reposed himself with "confidence in the arms of that Being who pene-"trates and sustains all nature," let us add, who likewise in Jesus Christ redeemed the world, "and "whose severities, if received with piety and resig-"nation, he regarded as the surest pledge of unex-"hausted favour[m]."

Thus prepared, he had nothing to do, but to wait with patience, and obey with joy, the divine summons to quit the "wilderness," and "pass over Jordan" into "that good land," to those "everlasting hills," the prospect of which had long been the solace and delight of his soul "in the house of her pilgrimage." During the solemn mockery of his unheard-of trial, the audacious insolence of his pretended judges, the barbarous and brutal insults, the revilings and the spittings of the merciless soldiers, "his soul," as the aforementioned writer beautifully expresses it, "without effort, or affectation, seemed only to re-"main in the situation familiar to it, and to look "down with contempt on all the efforts of human "malice and iniquity[n]." On the fatal morning—fatal, alas! to England, not to him—he arose with

[m] ume, p. 440. [n] Hume, p. 464.

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sprightliness and alacrity from that sweet sleep which a good cause and a good conscience can procure in the most perilous seasons, and which the noise of workmen employed in framing the scaffold for his execution, though resounding continually in his ears, had never been able either to prevent or disturb*. Exulting as a strong man, strong in faith, to run his appointed race, he desired to be dressed and adorned with more than usual care, as if it had been his bridal day, which indeed, in one sense, it was, when his soul was to be "called to the marriage supper "of the Lamb," and to go forth, as one of the "wise "virgins, to meet the Bridegroom." Having trimmed his lamp, therefore, with the proper preparatory devotions of that church which was ever so dear unto him, his mild spirit terminated its earthly course with an act of the highest charity to his enemies, and, taking the wings of the pure and peaceful dove, flew away to that blessed place, where, and where only, as he found by experience, "the wicked "cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Thus lived and thus died Charles the first, king and martyr. And though for your sakes I could wish the task of drawing a portrait from such an original had been in other hands, for my own I cannot but greatly rejoice at being called upon to bear a testimony, poor as it is, to a character which, however traduced by base and worthless men, and none but such can traduce it, does, and for ever will do, as much honour to the church, as the usage this

* Hume, p. 466.

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prince met with reflects dishonour on the people, of England.

And now, what remains, but that while we detest, and use our utmost endeavours to eradicate out of the minds of men those diabolical principles of resistance to government in church and state, which brought his sacred head to the block, we testify our regard for his precious memory by an imitation of his godlike virtues; setting before us, and copying, as well as we can, his unfeigned piety, his strict temperance, his spotless purity, his indulgent affection towards his relations, his tender love for his friends, his compassionate forgiveness of his enemies, his inviolable attachment to the church of God. And in the day of affliction, when it shall please our heavenly Father to lay on any of us that cross which every Christian must bear at some time or other of his life, "let us remember, if our "little misfortunes trouble us, that the best of kings "and the best of men was publicly murdered by his "own subjects[p];" and let us follow him in the steps in which he followed Christ; that so having lived the life of this righteous person, our last end may be blessed like his, and that having patiently and cheerfully endured our appointed portion of sorrow in this miserable world, and sent forth our latest breath in expressions of faith and charity, we may be numbered, as he is, "with the children of God, "and our lot be among the saints."

[p] Taylor's Holy Living, sect. 6.

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DISCOURSE XXIX.

MERCY TO THOSE WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH RECOMMENDED AND ENFORCED.

LAMENTATIONS, v. 3.

We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.

THE holy Jesus, who came forth from the bosom of his Father to teach us the way of salvation, was himself pleased to go before us in that way. Heavenly was the knowledge in which he instructed us, while in his blessed example we behold every jot and tittle of it realized and consummated in perfect charity. To convince us that the only use of learning is to make men good, and that every article of faith ought to terminate in a duty, the same divine Person, who appeared as the wellspring of uncreated wisdom, manifested himself to be the fountain of everlasting love. "Never man spake like this man," and never man acted like this man. His doctrine was that God "loved the world;" as a comment thereon, he "gave himself for us;" and therefore laid it down as an axiom in the evangelical philosophy, that "it

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"is more blessed to give than to receive[a]." As he came into the world to proclaim and to show mercy, so his law was the law of kindness, and his religion the religion of love.

What pleasure, then, must this day afford to every intelligent mind! with what joy must it fill every Christian heart, when our eyes are blessed with the sight of so illustrious an assembly of persons, bent upon convincing the world of the relation they bear to the Redeemer, by submitting to that test which himself hath appointed!—"By this shall all men "know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one "to another[b]." And as your attendance upon this occasion is a proof that much of the task devolved upon the preacher is already done to his hand, by the preparation and disposition of your hearts, towards the good work which it is his province to recommend to you; so he cannot but feel great comfort and encouragement in the reflection, that his subject is one which needeth not the skill of the orator and rhetorician to amplify and adorn it. It requireth only to be set forth in its native and artless dress:—"We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are "as widows."

The state here described is one so full of distress and so void of comfort, that we cannot be surprised at the effect naturally produced in the minds of the compassionate by the words which describe it. The eye of Heaven seemeth to drop a tear of pity over persons in this condition: the Almighty frequently

[a] Acts, xx. 35. [b] John, xiii. 35.

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acknowledgeth himself to be, as it were, overcome by their cries, and necessitated to take them under his immediate patronage and protection. The same God, who, in one verse of the lxviiith Psalm, is described as gloriously "riding upon the heavens," appeareth in the very next verse, as "a father of "the fatherless, and a judge of the widows[c]." "For "as his majesty is, so is his mercy[d]." "Great is "our Lord, and great is his power, yea, and his "wisdom is infinite[e]." But the chorus in which sinners most chiefly delight to join is this, "His "mercy endureth for ever[f]:" that mercy which employed his infinite wisdom to contrive, and his great power to execute, the plan of our redemption: that mercy which delivered the miserable, and thereby laid an obligation upon all men to do likewise.

The poor afflicted orphan, thrown upon the wide world, there to wander without house or home, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in pain and sickness; craving of those, who pass by the way regardless of his complaints, and not at leisure to be troubled with his pitiable story, one morsel of bread for the love of Jesus—what is he but a picture of fallen man, cast out of Paradise, and doomed to wander a stranger and a sojourner upon the earth; hungering and thirsting after something that might satisfy his empty soul; incessantly beat upon by cares and sorrows, imploring, for the love of the same

[c] Psal. lxviii. 4, 5. [d] Eccles. ii. 18.
[e] Psal. cxlvii. 5. [f] Psal. cxxxvi.

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Jesus, his daily bread; entreating forgiveness of his sins, and deliverance from evil. But, thanks be to God, the importunity of a petitioner is never complained of by him with whom we have to do. No angry frown bids the sinner be gone from the gate of heaven. There let him relate at length, the story of his woes. It is as music to him who first, "prepareth the heart" of the penitent for prayer, and then "his ear hearkeneth thereto."

The church, considered in that state in which she was left by the fall and death of the first Adam, is frequently represented in Scripture as a widow surrounded by fatherless children. And to her is applicable that apostolical description, "She that is a "widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and "continueth in supplications and prayers night and "day[g]." In this condition the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, saw her, and had compassion on her: He exhorted her to refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears: He "called her "as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, to re-"member the reproach of her widowhood no more[h]." She became the spouse of the King of Heaven, and all her children were made the sons of God. In him "the fatherless found mercy[i]," and he caused "this widow's heart to sing with joy[k]" everlasting hallelujahs to her benefactor and Saviour, her Lord and her God. The persons, therefore, for whom I am this day an advocate, though unworthy, have a

[g] 1 Tim. v. 5.
[h] Isaiah, liv. 4, 6.
[i] Hos. xiv. 3.
[k] Job, xxix. 13.

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claim to your compassionate regard upon this consideration, which was once the only plea of all the children of Adam at the throne of grace, "We "are orphans and fatherless, and our mothers as "widows."

This consideration, I say, might prevail in favour of the widows and orphans of those who had been your greatest enemies; which is not the case at present. Even Nabal's objection cannot now be made, were there any here disposed to make it, which I am well assured there are not: "Shall I take my "bread and my flesh, and give them to men whom "I know not whence they are[1]?" The husbands and fathers of those who solicit your charity were not even strangers; they were your "brethren and "kinsmen according to the flesh." Persons of the best families in the nation have not disdained to eat the bread of the church, but have esteemed it an honour to serve at the altars of their God. The clergy are no otherwise divided from the laity, than as they are taken out of them to be placed in a nearer relation, by their office, to the common Saviour of all; a circumstance which, instead of estranging, cannot but infinitely endear them to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

The Redeemer is, indeed, no longer upon earth in person, to receive good at the hands of men, as once in the highly favoured land of Judea; when, hungry and thirsty with long fasting, weary with journeying from place to place, and well nigh ex-

[1] 1 Sam. xxv. 11.

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hausted with his labours for the salvation of the world, he vouchsafed to eat bread at the tables of sinners, and asked water to drink of the woman of Samaria. But, says good King David, "Is there "yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I "may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake[m]?" Are there none left of the house of God, that we may show them kindness for Jesus' sake? Although Christ be in heaven, hath he no connexions upon earth, no poor relations left behind in the world? The present assembly is a proof that he hath. All the kind expressions relative to the sons and daughters of affliction, who are styled friends and relations, nay, members of the body of our Lord, are more emphatically applicable to the objects of your present attention, the widows and orphans of his indigent ministers. He who instructeth these ignorant ones, may be said, with Joseph and Mary, to educate the child Jesus. He who giveth food and raiment to these needy ones, with Martha and Mary, receiveth and entertaineth Jesus. And he who comforteth these afflicted, refresheth the bowels of Jesus. By such offices of love performed to your brethren and the brethren of the Lord, ye do show forth a remembrance of him "who though he was rich, yet for "your sakes he became poor, that ye through his "poverty might be rich[n]." What he said in the character of the good Samaritan to the host in whose hands he left the wounded traveller, he saith now to you—"Take care of them, and whatsoever ye

[m] 2 Sam. ix. i. [n] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

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"spend, when I come again I will repay you[o]."
"For he that hath pity upon these poor, without all
"doubt lendeth unto the Lord; and look what he
"layeth out, shall infallibly be paid him again[p]."
And whereas men are wont to glory in the multitude of their debtors, it is observed that Christ rejoiceth in the multitude of his creditors, and loveth those best to whom he oweth most. The clergy, therefore, might entreat for your friendly aid in the day of trouble, for the sake of their Master, had they no services of their own to plead.

But may I not be allowed to say, they have? or will it be taken amiss, if I affirm them to have been your friends and benefactors—friends and benefactors to all mankind? The sons of Levi blew the silver trumpets, and caused a joyful noise to be heard. Through their preaching, the word of salvation sounded forth, and glad tidings came to the inhabitants of the world. Who can express the labours and the sufferings undergone by the twelve illustrious leaders of the Christian armies, and their immediate followers, when, marching into the field of battle under the standard of the cross, they overthrew the strong holds of Paganism, and effected the conversion of the Roman empire? Nor hath the faith thus planted at the beginning been under God supported and defended in all ages since, but by the incessant toils of those who from time to time have been called to the exercise of the ministerial office. The sun at his rising hath often found them intent upon their studies for the edification of

[o] Luke, x. 35. [p] Prov. xix. 17.

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their people; and the moon and the stars in their courses by night have been witnesses of the fervent prayers put up to the throne of grace, that their instructions might have the desired effect, and the work of their hands be prospered upon them. Millions of souls, who, by the pious sermons, the holy writings, the seasonable reproofs, and the kind exhortations of their spiritual guides, were reclaimed from the error of their ways, and led in paths of righteousness to the mansions of glory, are now employed in making those mansions to resound with the praises of their great Creator and Redeemer, who instituted such an order of men, and wrought his wonders of mercy by them. And since there was a Judas among the twelve apostles, whose treason was never accounted any impeachment of the loyalty of the other eleven; nay, since there was a Lucifer even among the angels in heaven, whose fall could never be supposed to sully the brightness of them that stood; let not the failings of some be imputed to a whole body of men, who have so evidently been the instruments, in the hands of a gracious God, of bringing many sons to glory. But the benefactions of the clergy have been by no means confined to the church and to the souls of men. They have formerly, with fidelity to their sovereign, emolument to the public, and honour to themselves, discharged the most important trusts of the state. And the colleges, the hospitals, and the alms-houses by them founded and endowed, with their unnumbered private charities, do abundantly testify them not unmindful (when they had wherewithal) to relieve

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their poor brethren of the laity; whose kind help and assistance their afflicted widows and orphans humbly hope they may now, in their turn, without offence, solicit and implore.

But the case of the reformed clergy of the church of England merits a more particular consideration. For certainly, if to reinstate the Scriptures in their rightful throne, and to place the pure light of evangelical truth upon the holy candlestick; if to clear the faith from the corrupt traditions of men, and to reduce practice from spending itself in idle fopperies and unprofitable pilgrimages to works of piety and charity; if to free devotion from ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and to render it intelligible, rational, and acceptable to God; if to give to saints the honour due unto them, without robbing the master to adorn the servant; if to pull down the usurpations of human pride and policy, and to exalt the holy Jesus, as head of his church, and justifier of his people; if to restore to the king his subjects and sovereignty, to the laity that cup which is the communion of the blood of Christ, and to all the due and proper use of reason enlightened by revelation in matters of religion; and lastly, if to free the nation from the exorbitant impositions of the court of Rome; if there be any merit in all this, the clergy cannot be without their share of it, who preached, and wrote, and suffered, in the cause of the reformation. And in one respect, through an original neglect at that time, they have *suffered* ever since. The tithes of many livings had been seized by the Pope, and appropriated to the maintenance

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of his creatures in the monasteries, while the person officiating was forced to take up with the scanty pittance which they thought proper to allow him. Upon the dissolution of the monasteries, those tithes, instead of reverting to the parochial priests, whose they were by all the laws of God and man, became a prey to the rapacious courtiers of king Henry VIII. and king Edward. So that the clergy of the church of England obtained, indeed, at the reformation the liberty of increasing their families, but were unhappily deprived of the allowance necessary to maintain them. A clergyman, after having spent a little fortune in his education, by the unwearied exertion of all the interest he is able to make, is at length so successful, as to be presented to one of these impoverished vicarages. Perhaps (as is frequently the case) his lot falls in a market-town, where his cure is large, and his income scarce equal to the annual acquisitions of half the tradesmen in it. By canons and statutes he is restrained from improving his revenue by any secular occupation, but yet by the laws subject to a share of the secular burthens. His dues, trifling as they are, will be detained, if he doth not sometimes prosecute for them; and if he doth, he will be vilified and abused; he will be in danger of losing his influence, perhaps of being ruined by the suit. In these circumstances he is to bring up a family to support the dignity of his character, and it will ever be expected of him, that he should set an example to his parishioners of hospitality and charity. Whoever shall consider what multitudes of those who enter into holy orders

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have nothing better, if any thing so good as this to expect, will esteem it a singular providence that the daily sacrifice hath not ceased from amongst us, for want of the officiating ministers. A desire of doing good seemeth to be the only motive left to induce numbers, destitute of views and interests, to commence preachers of the Gospel; since the man would scarcely stand clear of an absurdity who should now make that wretched request, which it was prophesied that the posterity of Eli should make as a punishment for the sins of their ancestors: "Put "me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, "that I may eat a piece of bread[q]."

Here then we are at the source of those miseries, which it is the pious design of this day's assembly to alleviate. They who preach the Gospel are not suffered to live of the Gospel: and, by the alienation of the tithes from the livings, the case of the parochial clergy in England, is, in reality, harder than that of the ministers of any church in the world not under persecution. Therefore is there a voice so often heard in Ramah, lamenting, and weeping, and great mourning; the voice of some one or other of "the wives "of the sons of the prophets, saying, Thy servant "my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy "servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is "come to take unto him my two sons to be bond-"men[r]." The good man, worn out with study and labour for the benefit of others, is hardly gone to repose in the dust, but his widow is driven from her

[q] 1 Sam. ii. 36. [r] 2 Kings, iv. 1.

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home, endeared with all its inconveniences by custom, and much more so by the sad consideration, that she hath not now where to lay her head, or wherewithal to satisfy her orphans; while "the tongue of "the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth "for thirst; the young children ask for bread, and "no man breaketh it unto them[s]." In this situation, she cannot but call to mind those better times, those days of plenty and prosperity, which she once knew in her father's house, ere she had given her hand to the object of her esteem and affections; who yet standeth chargeable with no crime but this, that, being separated to the service of God, he was of a profession which never put it into his power to provide for her support.—O come that blessed day when those widows' tears shall be wiped for ever from their eyes, and the reproach of the married clergy be effectually taken off; when the land shall be cleared of these pernicious remnants of *popery* (for such they are), and the reformation be carried to its full perfection!—Meanwhile the wretched orphan asks only to be preserved alive, and made an useful member of society; and daily bread is the humble request of the desolate widow, whose husband hath so often reached forth the bread of eternal life to the hungry soul: and since yours, my brethren of the laity, since yours hath been the harvest of the reformation, at least "let her glean among the "sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also "some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and

[s] Lam. iv. 4.

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"leave them that she may gleam them, and rebuke "her not[t]:" remembering that which is written in the law of Moses—"When thou cuttest down thine "harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the "field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall "be for the fatherless and for the widow, that the "Lord thy God may bless thee in all the works of "thine hands[u]."

And all the blessings of eternity rest on the heads of those who have successively contributed to the support of this corporation, which was erected by king Charles II. and hath since been honoured by repeated instances of royal munificence: to which if we add the bounty of the excellent queen Anne, whose piety towards the clergy will be had in everlasting remembrance, and their children's children call her blessed for her endeavours, by giving the tenth and first fruits for the augmentation of poor livings yearly, to cut off, in part, the source of their distress, it may indeed be affirmed, and we may and do tell it out with joy and gratitude, that "kings "have been our nursing fathers, and queens our "nursing mothers." Nor hath this voluntary engagement, entered into by the sons of the clergy for the relief of their poor brothers and sisters, wanted the assistance either of persons of quality and fortune among the laity, or of many illustrious and venerable prelates, who, by charity, preferable in the judgement of the apostle to the power of working miracles, have prevented the poor widow's barrel of

[t] Ruth, ii. 15. [u] Deut. xxiv. 19.

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meal from wasting and her cruise of oil from failing. By these blessed instruments of his providence and love doth the Almighty address the foreboding and desponding soul of every dying servant of his, in the words of that gracious and comfortable promise: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them "alive, and let thy widow trust in me."

Happy, therefore, are all they who have it this day in their power to imitate the loving kindness of their heavenly Father, and to copy after the example of the holy Jesus, while they show their gratitude for the benefits received from him at the hands of his ministers, by contributing to relieve the distresses of their impoverished families. Riches thus expended are returned with increase into the bosoms of the generous; for "the liberal soul shall be made fat," "and he who watereth shall be watered also him-"self[x]." Alms given through faith procure "de-"liverance in the time of trouble[y];" they "fight "for us against our enemies, better than a mighty "shield and strong spear[z];" they ascend up for "a "memorial before God[a]," and bring down the benedictions of heaven upon us; they sanctify to us the whole creation[b] in the days of health; they comfort us, when we most need comfort, on the bed of sickness[c]; and they follow us whither our estates and possessions cannot[d]. "He who receiveth a "prophet in the name of a prophet," and "who

[x] Prov. xi. 25. [y] Psal. xli. 1. [z] Ecclus. xxix. 13.
[a] Acts, x. 4. [b] Luke, xi. 41. [c] Psal. xli. 3.
[d] Rev. xiv. 13.

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"giveth to these little ones but a cup of cold water, "because they belong to Christ, shall in no wise lose "his reward[e]" in that day, when the "merciful "shall obtain mercy[f];" when he who hath not turned away his face from the poor shall not behold the face of the Lord turned away from him[g]; when the widow and the fatherless shall be the ablest advocates, and plead with irresistible eloquence in behalf of their kind benefactors, whose liberality saved them from want and destruction. For, lo! an awful silence, and all the attention of heaven and earth engaged, while from the throne of judgement proceed these gracious words addressed to the merciful—"I "was an hungred, and ye gave *me* meat; I was "thirsty, and ye gave *me* drink; I was naked and "ye clothed *me*—for, inasmuch as ye did it unto "the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto *me*. "Come therefore, ye blessed of my Father, inherit "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation "of the world[h]. Ye are they which have continu-"ed with me in my temptation[i]; be ye numbered "with my saints in glory everlasting."—Which God grant that we all may be, through the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, now and for evermore. Amen.

[e] Matt. x. 41, 42; Mark, ix. 41. [f] Matt. v. 7.
[g] Tobit, iv. 7. [h] Matt. xxv. 34. [i] Luke, xxii. 28.

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DISCOURSE XXX.

WORKS WROUGHT THROUGH FAITH A CONDITION OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

JAMES, II. 24.

Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

WAS a disciple of the holy Jesus permitted to carve his own lot, and to choose his employment in the world, he would doubtless wish to pass his days, without strife and contention, in the pleasing task of contemplating the love, and setting forth the praises, of his divine Lord and Master. But this is a felicity reserved for us in a better world, and shall be given to them for whom it is prepared, when the church shall pass out of her militant into her triumphant state. At present she is in an enemy's country; there is a noise of war continually in the camp; and every man must have his "sword upon his thigh, "because of fear in the night;" every minister of the Gospel must be armed with "the sword of the "Spirit, which is the word of God," to combat every error, and put every heresy to flight, that may otherwise take the advantage of those seasons when the church is least upon her guard, to assault and hurt the faith. It has indeed been a maxim some-

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times laid down, that false opinions, if let alone, will die of themselves. But surely the Gospel and experience teach us another lesson. If men sleep while the tares are sown, it will cost them many waking hours to root them up when they are grown, besides the great danger there is of rooting up the wheat complicated and entangled with them at the same time. And if the master of the house should think it needless to extinguish a fire already kindled, and insinuating itself among the beams that compose and support the edifice, he may soon be seen bewailing his unpardonable negligence over its ruins. Should it be asked who are the proper persons to defend the faith, when it is attacked from time to time, and to state the Christian doctrines aright, as often as they are in divers manners misunderstood and perverted; the answer is obvious—They who, by the liberality of founders and benefactors, are separated from the cares and concerns of the world, that they may attend without distraction upon this very thing, and see, *ne quid detrimenti ecclesia capiat*.

The solifidian, or antinomian heresy, which asserts, "that man is justified by faith without works," and which took its rise from a misunderstanding and perversion of some passages in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, was one of the first that disturbed the Christian church; insomuch that St. Augustine says, that not only the Epistle of St. James, but likewise those of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude, were written to guard the faithful against its pernicious influences. His words are—"Contra eam maxime

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"dirigunt intentionem, ut vehementer astruant, "fidem sine operibus nihil prodesse[a]." Many have been the heresies since, in the composition of which this opinion has been a prime ingredient. But it was all in its glory in the last century, and had taken possession of the theological chair in this university, when the incomparably learned Bishop Bull entered the lists against it, and, encountering its ablest champions, gave it a total defeat in that palmary work the *Harmonia Apostolica*, with its defences, styled, by Dr. Grabe, the triumph of the church of England[b]. But as heresies make their periodical revolutions in the church, like comets, in the heavens, to shed a baleful influence on all about them, the time seems to be coming when antinomianism is to be again rampant among us. And what wonder that this or any other heresy should be introduced and propagated, if men, instead of having recourse to the Catholic doctors of the ancient church, and to such of our divines as have trodden in their steps, will extract their theology from the latest and lowest of the modern sectaries, thus beginning where they should end? if, instead of drawing living water for the use of the sanctuary from the fresh springs of primitive antiquity, they take up with such as comes to them at second or third hand from the lake of Geneva? if the spirit of a Cyprian, exerted in the maintenance of the *vigor Episcopatûs* and the constitution of the church, be accounted for bigotry and

[a] Aug. de Fid. et Op. cap. 14.
[b] Nelson's Life of Bishop Bull, p. 235.

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narrowness, and Clement and Ignatius pass for but very moderate divines, when compared with the new lights of the Tabernacle and Foundery? Should this method of studying divinity prevail, to the exclusion of the other, there will soon be neither order left in the church nor certainty in the faith.

It is by no means my design, in the following discourse, to endeavour to conduct you through all the windings and foldings of the polemical labyrinth of justification. A matter of such importance as man's acceptance with his Maker does not, blessed be God, depend upon nice scholastic subtleties, nor fond enthusiastic fancies. It may be settled in a short and easy way, by such plain declarations of Scripture as holy men of old were wont to direct themselves by, in those happy times when no one was accounted a believer who was not virtuous, and when faith and a good life were synonymous terms. "Alas!" saith Bishop Taylor, "the niceties of a spruce understand-
"ing and the curious nothings of useless specula-
"tion, and all the opinions of men that make the
"divisions of heart, and do nothing else, cannot
"bring us one drop of comfort in the day of tribu-
"lation, and therefore are no parts of the strength
"of faith: nay, when a man begins truly to fear
"God, and is in the agonies of mortification, all these
"new nothings and curiosities will lie neglected by,
"as bawbles do by children when they are deadly
"sick. But that only is faith, which makes us to
"love God, to do his will, to suffer his impositions,
"to trust his promises, to see through a cloud, to
"overcome the world, to resist the devil, to stand

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"in the day of trial, and to be comforted in all our "sorrows[e]." The proposition therefore which I shall undertake to prove, or rather to collect and set before you in one point of view the arguments by which learned men, and particularly the author of the Harmonia, have irrefragably proved it, is that evidently contained in the words of St. James now read to you, viz. that works wrought through faith are a necessary condition of our justification: "Ye see, "then, how that by works a man is justified, and not "by faith only."

I call works a necessary condition of our justification, because most certain it is, that the only meritorious cause thereof is the satisfaction of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who alone by his most precious blood shed upon the cross hath obtained for us remission of sins and eternal life. But in the Gospel covenant, to which we are now admitted by baptism, faith and works are the conditions, to the performance of which through the power of his grace God has annexed the promises of redemption, and without the performance of which a right to those promises can neither be acquired nor preserved. That faith is such a necessary condition, all Christians are agreed. That works are so likewise I shall prove—from Scripture testimonies; from Scripture examples; from the nature of faith; from the nature of justification; and from the process at the day of judgement: after which I shall show from

[e] Bp. Taylor's Sermon styled *Fides Formata*, printed in the folio edition of his Sermons, p. 43.

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St. Paul's own words, that he preaches the very same doctrine with St. James; and close the whole with the state of that doctrine given by Bishop Bull in the noble confession of his faith in this particular made by him when on his death bed.

And, first, that works are a necessary condition of our justification may be proved from plain and express testimonies of holy Scripture. For thus God by the prophet Isaiah enjoins his rebellious people to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," and then promises that though "their past sins were as "scarlet, they should be white as snow[d]." Here, "remission of sins" through the Redeemer is the gift on God's part: "ceasing to do evil," and "learning to "do well," are the conditions on man's part. In the same manner the prophet Ezekiel informs the sinner, to his great and endless comfort, that if he will "turn from his evil ways, and make restitution, "and walk in the statutes of life," then "all his sins "that he hath sinned shall not be once mentioned[e]." Our Lord in the Gospel calls all sinners to him, that they may "find rest to their souls" in the arms of his mercy forgiving them their trespasses; but then it is upon condition that they "take his yoke," that is, his law "upon them, and learn of him, and fol-"low him," as his disciples, in word and deed. "Ye are my friends," says he in another place, "if "ye do whatsoever I command you[f]." Agreeably hereto it is declared by St. Peter, "that in every

[d] Isai. i. 16. [e] Ezek. xxxiii. 14. [f] John, xv. 14.

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"nation he that feareth God and worketh righteous-
"ness is accepted of him[g]." And St. John in like manner instructs us, that "if we walk in light, as "God is in the light, then have we communion with "him, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleans-"eth us from all sin[h]." And again—"Let no man "deceive you;" there is therefore some danger of our being deceived in this point: "he that doeth "righteousness is righteous[i]." And these testimonies may suffice for the necessity of works in general as a condition of our justification.

But we must not, upon this occasion, forget those Scriptures which insist upon the necessity of the great work of repentance in particular for that purpose. To call men from time to time to repentance was a part of the employment of the prophets until John, who thus began his preaching—"Repent, for "the kingdom of heaven is at hand[k]:" "bring forth "fruits meet for repentance[l];" that is, in the language of St. Paul, "do works meet for repent-"ance[m]." When Jesus himself began to preach, it was in these words: "Repent, and believe the "Gospel[n]." With him accordeth the apostle St. Peter, in his first sermon to the Jews on the day of Pentecost—"Repent, and be baptized, every one "of you, for the remission of sins[o]." And again, in another sermon afterwards—"Repent, and be "converted, that your sins may be blotted out[p];" that is, that you may be *justified*. Nor is repent-

[g] Acts, x. 34. [h] 1 John, i. 7. [i] 1 John, iii. 7.
[k] Matt. iii. 2. [l] Ibid. 8. [m] Acts, xxvi. 20.
[n] Mark, i. 15. [o] Acts, ii. 38. [p] Ibid. xiii. 19.

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ance a single work, but a complication of many, comprehending under it, if it be genuine and sincere, the following particulars: viz. a true sorrow and deep compunction of heart for sins past; a humiliation under the righteous hand of God; a hatred and detestation of sin; an unreserved confession of it; an earnest and importunate solicitation for the divine grace and mercy; the fear and love of God; a ceasing from evil, and the occasions that may lead to it; a firm purpose of a new obedience; restitution of what hath been unjustly gotten; forgiveness of all them who may have trespassed against us; and lastly, works of beneficence and charity. These are the plain and easy diagnostics of a true repentance, as that is the best evidence of a man's being an object of the divine mercy, and in the right way to justification.

A second argument to prove that works are a necessary condition of our justification, may be deduced from the examples of holy men of old who were so justified. Of these illustrious worthies we have a long list in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here let us learn what justifying faith is, by seeing what it was, and what it did, in those heroes of the ancient church proposed to us by the apostle for our imitation. By faith Abel offered a sacrifice in obedience to the institution of God; Noah built an ark; Abraham left his country and kindred, and offered up all that was near and dear to him; Moses rejected all the pleasures and honours of the court of Egypt, and chose to have his part and portion with the oppressed and afflicted church;

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and so of the rest. By faith they overcame the world, vanquished all the affections of the flesh when they stood in the way of duty, manfully resisted the devil, and lived and died in the love of God and their neighbour. They "fought a good fight," they "finished their course," they "kept the faith," by making it a constant principle of action, and maintaining good works, without which they had assuredly fallen short of the inheritance. In a word, "through "faith," as saith the apostle, "they wrought righ-"teousness," and therefore "obtained his promises[q]." And if it be true, as most true it is, that without faith they had never "wrought righteousness," it is equally true, that without working righteousness through faith, they have never "obtained the "promises."

The example that bids the fairest for justification by faith without works is that of the thief upon the cross. But a nearer inspection will soon convince us, that even in that instance, singular as it was, faith came attended by her handmaids, repentance, piety, and charity. For first, without compulsion he made a full confession of his own guilt and his Saviour's innocence—"We receive the full reward of "our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." 2dly, He made an open profession of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the king of Israel, when he hung naked on the cross, mocked and derided by the Jews, and forsaken of all, as an outcast of heaven and earth. 3dly, He prayed to him in that character—"Lord, remember me, when thou comest into

[q] Heb. xi. 33.

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"thy kingdom." And, lastly, his charity reproved and endeavoured to effect the conversion of his fellow-sufferer—"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou "art in the same condemnation? And we indeed "justly," &c. There is a passage upon the subject in one of the fathers so extremely beautiful and apposite to the present purpose, that I cannot help translating it—"The penitent thief performs many "offices of religion at the same time. He believes, "he fears, he feels compunction, and repents; he "confesses, and preaches; he loves, he trusts, and "he prays. He is enlightened by faith, subdued by "fear, softened by compunction, shaken by repent-"ance, purged by confession; he is zealous in his "preaching, and enlarged in his charity; he hopes "through confidence, and obtains by prayer[r]." Never surely did man perform so much in so short a time! And if he was not justified by faith alone, where shall we find an example of one who was? But,

Thirdly, if we consider the nature of faith, it will appear to be impossible that any man should be justified by that alone. For if faith can of itself avail to justification, it must be either as it is an assent to the Gospel truths, or a reliance on the Gospel promises; for I know of no other notion of faith

[r] Multa simul pietatis officia complectitur. Credit, timet, compungitur, et pœnitet; confitetur et prædicat; amat, confidit, et orat. Fide illuminatur, timore subditur, compunctione mollitur, pœnitentia concutitur, confessione purgatur, predicatione zelatur, dilectione dilatatur, confidentia sperat, oratione impetrat. Arnold. de ultimis septem verbis Domini.

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besides these two. Now that faith as an assent to the truths of the Gospel cannot justify, is agreed on all hands; else were the devils justified, whose faith, or belief of the truths relating to him who is to be their judge, makes them tremble, which is more than it does to many who profess to have it. And then, as to faith as a reliance on the Gospel promises, those promises being conditional, every reliance must be a delusion which is not founded upon a conscience witnessing the performance of the conditions; and a reliance that is so founded is the result of works wrought through faith. It undeniably follows therefore, that faith cannot justify but as it worketh by love; and, consequently, that works are a necessary condition of our justification.

The same proposition may be evinced, fourthly, from the nature of justification, which being a forensic term, implies a prisoner at the bar, a law by which he is to be tried, a witness to accuse him, and a judge to pass sentence. Thus, in the case before us, the prisoner at the bar is man; the law by which he is to be tried is not the law of Moses, exacting a perfect and sinful obedience, but that of Christ, requiring repentance and faith, with their proper fruits; the witness is conscience; the judge is Christ. Now, no one can be justified, unless he be absolved by that law by which he is tried; nor can he be absolved by a law unless he has fulfilled it. Indeed, were we to be tried by a law requiring perfect obedience, it is certain no flesh could be justified by it, no man being able to fulfil it. But as we are to be tried by a law requiring repentance and faith, with

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their proper fruits, which now, through the blood of Christ, are accepted and "counted for righteous-"ness," it most certainly follows, that works, Gospel works, works of repentance and faith, are necessary conditions of our justification, and that we cannot be justified without them. This consequence cannot be evaded, but by supposing that the Gospel is entirely made up of promises, without any precepts to the observance of which through faith those promises are annexed; a supposition surely that can be made by no man that has ever read the first seven chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel.

The fifth and last argument to prove that works are a necessary condition of our justification, is drawn from the method of God's proceeding at the day of judgement, as the manner of our being justified will be best seen by the manner in which we are declared to be so at that day. Now, how often is it said in the New Testament, that God shall judge every man according to his works, and that not the hearers or bare believers of the Gospel, any more than of the law, shall be accounted "just before God?" "We "must all stand," saith the apostle, "before the "judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may re-"ceive the things done in his body, according to "that he hath done, whether it be good or bad[s]." Our Lord, warning men against foolish talking, because "of every idle word they must give account "in the day of judgement,"—subjoins—"for by thy "words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words "thou shalt be condemned[t]." And elsewhere he

[s] 2 Cor. v. 10. [t] Matt. xii. 36, 37.

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foretels his second advent in these words—"The Son "of man shall come in the glory of his Father with "his holy angels, and then shall he reward every "man according to his works[u]." And some of the last words delivered by him to his church after his ascension, by the ministration of the well beloved John, are these which follow—"Behold, I come "quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every "man according as his work shall be[v]." But above all, that celebrated passage, Matt. xxv. where the process of the last day is described, should be engraved as with the point of a diamond on the tables of our hearts for ever. There we hear the Judge from his glorious throne, before which all nations are assembled to receive their final doom, declaring some to be justified and accepted, because their faith had wrought works of love to him in his poor brethren and members; and others, because their faith had not wrought those works, to be condemned and everlastingly rejected. "Then shall the King say "unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed "children of my Father, inherit the kingdom pre-"pared for you from the foundation of the world. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I "was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a "stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloth-"ed me; I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in "prison, and ye came unto me.—Then shall he say "also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the

[u] Matt. xvi. 27. [v] Rev. xxii. 12.

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"devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and "ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave "me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me "not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and "in prison, and ye visited me not." If therefore works wrought through faith are the ground of the sentence passed upon us at the day of judgement, then are they a necessary condition of our justification, of which that sentence is declarative.

Thus plainly doth it appear from Scripture testimonies, from Scripture examples, from the nature of faith, from the nature of justification, and from the process of the last day, that "by works a man "is justified, and not by faith only." Marvellous would it be if, after this, we should find the great apostle of the Gentiles preaching a contrary doctrine. But having made our ground good thus far, we shall easily be able, by a short state of that case, to show that he doth not, but harmonizeth in every respect with his brother apostle.

In the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul undertakes to demonstrate that all who would be saved, whether Jews or Gentiles, must have recourse to the Gospel of Christ. To evince the necessity of their so doing, he begins with convicting the whole world of sin. In the first chapter he prefers a bill of indictment against the Gentiles, setting before them their abominable sins against God, their neighbours, and their own souls and bodies; their idolatry, and their iniquity. But, as the Jew was always ready to thank God that he was not as the Gentiles were, as living under a per-

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fect law given him by God himself immediately from heaven, St. Paul in the second chapter takes down his pride, by telling him, that the perfection of a law could not be matter of glory, but of shame and condemnation to the transgressors of it; and that this was so notoriously the case of the Jews, that through their breaking the law, in which they foolishly made their boast, the lawgiver was dishonoured, and the name of God blasphemed even among the Gentiles on that account. Having thus proved both Jews and Gentiles to be under sin, having stopped every mouth by showing all the world to be guilty and obnoxious to the judgement of God, the apostle makes his inference in the third chapter—"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no "flesh be justified in his sight; plainly, because all flesh having transgressed the law, all flesh is condemned by it, and therefore men must go elsewhere for justification. St. Paul tells them whither they are to go in the following glorious state of that doctrine according to the Gospel—"But now the righ-"teousness of God without the law is manifested, "being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus "Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; "for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and "come short of the glory of God; being justified "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is "in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a "propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare "his righteousness for the remission of sins that are "past, through the forbearance of God; to declare,

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"I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might "be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth "in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is exclud-"ed. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the "law of faith." From these premises the apostle now draws his great conclusion—"Therefore we con-"clude that a man is justified by faith, without the "deeds of the law." Out of these last words arise two questions, which being answered, every difficulty will vanish, and the great truth witnessed both by St. Paul and St. James shine forth without a cloud. The questions are these. First, what are the works here excluded by St. Paul, as unnecessary to justification? Secondly, what is the faith to which justification is attributed?

With regard to the first, what are the works here excluded by St. Paul, as unnecessary to justification? the answer is obvious. They are Heathen and Jewish works, whether ceremonial or moral, performed without the grace of Christ, and set up as meritorious. Without these, doubtless, a man is justified; for it was the impossibility of his being justified by them which made it necessary that justification should be the gift of God, and brought Christ from heaven to obtain it for us. That these are the works intended by the apostle is undeniably evident from hence, that Heathens and carnal Jews are the persons against whom he is here arguing. Not one word is here said against good works wrought through faith by the Holy Ghost, which are as necessary a condition of our justification as faith itself, and

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made so by this very St. Paul, as shall be now shown, in answer to the

Second question, viz. what is the faith, to which justification is attributed by him in this place? He shall tell us himself. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, "but faith which worketh by love[x]." "In Christ "Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor "uncircumcision, but a new creature[y]." "In Christ "Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor "uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of "God[z]." Who does not see here that the faith to which St. Paul attributes justification, in opposition to the deeds of the law, is that "which worketh by "love," is the same with the "new creature," and implies in it the "keeping the commandments of "God?"

Again, "Therefore there is now no condemnation "to them which are in Christ Jesus[a];" that is, they are justified. But who are they? It follows—"who "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," that is, who do not the works of the flesh, but the works of the Spirit: doing the works of the Spirit, therefore, is the condition of their justification—"If ye live "after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the "Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall "live."

Once more, this same apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. speaking of faith, though otherwise ever so sound and

[x] Gal. v. 6.
[y] Ibid. vi. 15.
[z] 1 Cor. viii. 19.
[a] Rom. viii. 1.

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right, as disjoined from charity or love, maketh it to be of no value—" Though I have all faith, and " have no charity, I am nothing." Faith therefore, all faith, faith in the highest degree, avails nothing unto justification, but so far as it " worketh by love" to the " keeping the commandments." The most orthodox faith may be without charity, and then it will be altogether unprofitable to him who hath it. But there would be no end of citing passages from St. Paul to this effect. Let these therefore suffice.

But what shall we say to the case of Abraham, of whom St. Paul asserts, " that he believed God, and " it was counted to him for righteousness?" Why, truly, we have nothing to say, but only this, that St. James brings this very instance of Abraham as of one who was justified by works: " Wilt thou " know, O vain man, that faith without works is " dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by " works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the " altar? Seest thou" (and wonderful it is that there should be any one who does not see), " how faith ' wrought with his works, and by works was faith " made perfect?" And so, his works being all wrought through faith, the Scripture was still fulfilled which saith, " Abraham believed God, and it was " counted unto him for righteousness;" his faith working by love was accepted in Christ Jesus, according to the terms of that Gospel, which " the " Scripture preached before unto him." Thus in this instance of the father of the faithful, as in a common centre, are the doctrines of both apostles met:

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one says, a man is justified by "faith working;" the other by working "faith;" and this is really and truly all the difference there is between them. What pity then is it that so many volumes should have been written, to the infinite vexation and disturbance of the church, upon the question—Whether a man is justified by faith or works; seeing they are two essential parts of the same thing! The body and the spirit make the man; faith and works make the Christian. "For as the body without the spirit is "dead," and therefore but half the man, "so faith "without works is dead also," and therefore but half the Christian. Nor can any son of Abraham be justified otherwise than his father is declared to have been—"Faith wrought with his works, and by "works was faith made perfect."

I close all with the noble confession made by Bishop Bull of his faith in this article of justification, and ratified by him just before his death, when he experienced the comfort of having adhered to it through life, steering his course thereby, amidst all the antinomian errors of those fanatic times in which he wrote, to the haven of everlasting rest.

"I most firmly believe," says this excellent prelate, "that as I yield a steadfast assent to the Gospel of "Christ, and as I work out true repentance by that "faith, shaking off, by the grace of God, the yoke "of every deadly sin, and devoting myself in earnest "to the observation of his evangelical law, I shall "obtain, by the sovereign mercy of God the Father,

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"for the merits only of Jesus Christ, his Son, and "my Lord and Saviour, who offered himself up un-"to the Father a truly expiatory sacrifice for my "sins, and for the sins of the whole world, the full "remission of all my past sins, be they never so "many and great. But then I have no otherwise "any confidence of my sins being forgiven me, or "of my being in a state of grace and salvation, but "as by a serious examination of my conscience, "made according to the rule of the Gospel, there "shall be evidence of the sincerity of my faith and "repentance. And I believe moreover, that while I "bring forth fruits worthy of faith and repentance, "and while I not only abstain from those crimes "which, according to the Gospel, exclude a man "from heaven, but do diligently likewise exercise "myself in good works, both those of piety towards "God, and those of charity towards my neighbour, "so long I may preserve the grace that is given me "of remission and justification; and that if I die in "this state, I am in the way of obtaining by it the "mercy of God, and eternal life and salvation for "the sake of Jesus Christ. I believe yet that I may "fall away; and, after having received the Holy "Ghost, as our church speaketh, depart from grace; "and that therefore I ought to work out my salva-"tion with fear and trembling. I believe also that "in the Gospel there is pardon promised to all "that fall, let it be never so often, so that they do "before their death renew their repentance, and "do again their first works; but then there is

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"not any where promised to them either space "of life, or grace that they may repent. I believe "that there is given to some persons a certain "extraordinary grace, according to the good plea-"sure of God; but I account it the greatest mad-"ness for any one therefore to presume upon such "a grace, or to challenge aught for himself be-"yond the promises of God which are made in "the Gospel. And lastly, it is my firm belief, "that throughout the whole course of my salva-"tion, from the very first setting out to the end "thereof, the grace and assistance of God's Spi-"rit is absolutely necessary; and that I never "have done, nor never can do, any spiritual good "without Christ, is my full and certain per-"suasion. This is the way of salvation which "by God's grace I have entered into, or at least "have desired to enter into, which I have there-"fore chosen, because it is clearly set forth to "me in the Holy Scriptures, and is a trodden "and safe way, which all catholic Christians for "fifteen hundred years at least from our Saviour's "birth have trodden before me[b]."

God Almighty enable us all to walk in the same way to the same end; and for this purpose let us beseech him, in those excellent words of the church, to "give unto us the increase of faith, hope, "and charity; and that we may obtain that which

[b] Apolog. pro Harmon. p. 12. Nelson's Life of Bishop Bull, p. 463.

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"he doth promise, he would make us to love that "which he doth command, through Jesus Christ "our Lord. Amen[c]."

[c] Collect for the 14th Sunday after Trinity.

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DISCOURSE XXXI.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON CIVIL SOCIETY.

TITUS, II. 11, 12.

The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

WERE it required to produce from the Scriptures that passage, which exhibits, in fewest words, the fullest account of the nature and design of Christianity, this is, perhaps, the passage that should be fixed on for the purpose. Let us, therefore, survey and examine the striking features of so pleasing a portrait.

It is by no means intended to enter into a discussion at large of the various topics here suggested by the apostle. It will be more advisable to contract our views, and confine them to a single point. It shall be this: viz. the friendly aspect which Christianity, as here represented—and it is here truly represented—bears towards society, and the welfare and felicity of mankind upon earth. In other words, I

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would wish, by an illustration of the text, to convey to your minds some faint idea of that state of things, which would begin to show itself in the world were the religion of Jesus rightly understood and zealously practised among men. A view of the Gospel, in this light, will furnish us with proper answers to some objections made by its enemies, as if it had been useless, nay, even prejudicial, to society. An inference will likewise offer itself to the consideration of its friends, suitable to this audience, and the present solemnity.

St. Paul, then, first declares the origin, universality, and general intent of the Gospel. It was not a production of earth: it came from above; it was χαρις Θεε, the *grace*, or *gift*, *of God*. As a gift, we may conclude it given, like other gifts, for the benefit of the receivers. As the gift of him who is the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, it must be calculated to diffuse mercy and comfort among his creatures. Issuing from the God of peace and order, it could never be designed to give birth to wars and tumults. Offspring of that Being who, as St. John tells us, is love, it could never be intended to produce hatred in the hearts of which it should take possession. Proceeding from the God of holiness and of life, it was not designed to be the means of enlarging the empire of sin and death. It came, σωτηριος, "bringing salvation," or deliverance from every enemy; and it came to all, without distinction of sex or age, country or condition, Επεφανη η χαρις τε Θεε η σωτηριος πασιν ανθρωποις. It appeared, it shone forth, manifesting itself by its own

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splendour, like the day-spring from on high; like the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, free, bright, universal; author of light and life, of joy and gladness; and hailed, as such, by all things in heaven and earth. It appeared to dispel ignorance, as darkness; and to disseminate knowledge, as light; to inform and instruct mankind; παιδευουσα ημας, taking us into training, and putting us under discipline, in the school of a Divine Master, who teacheth us to avoid evil and to pursue good; and who alone can enable us to do either with effect. In this last particular his school excels all others, with respect to the benefits accruing from it to civil society, in proportion as it is better that men should practise virtue, than that they should speak or write of it. Mankind, it is true, wanted a perfect law, or rule of conduct; but this was not all. The perfection of a law would afford small comfort to those who lived under it, if they could not observe it, and must perish for transgressing it. Men stood in need of other things; they stood in need of pardon for their past errors, and a renewal of their powers unto future obedience. Herein is the glory of the Gospel. This is the triumph of "the grace "of God," which, by the Gospel, hath appeared "unto all men, teaching us," and bestowing the virtues it enjoins, "that, denying ungodliness and "worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, "and godly, in this present world."

Αρνησαμενοι την ασεβειαν, denying, disclaiming, renouncing, forsaking *impiety;* every species of irreligion; either disbelief of a Deity, or mistaken no-

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tions of his nature, attributes, providence, and of the manner in which he is to be worshipped; with all the erroneous and abominable practices consequent thereupon. How prejudicial these were to the interests of society, no one can be ignorant, to whom the history of the Heathen world is in any degree known. And the case must be the same in every age. The actions of men must always take a deep tincture from the colour of their religious or irreligious principles. He who believes in a Deity, of whatever kind, will endeavour to please, by imitating him; and he who believes in none, like the poor demoniac in the Gospel, easily bursts all other bands, neither can any man hold him.

"Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts"—Κοσμικαι επιθυμιαι *dicuntur eæ cupiditates*, says Grotius, *quas major pars hominum sequitur; ea enim major pars sæpe, in his libris,* τȣ̃ κοσμȣ *vocatur nomine.* Worldly lusts, or desires, are desires whose objects are worldly, and by worldly men coveted and sought after by undue means, or in an inordinate manner, beyond the limits designed and appointed by God and nature. And what is it but the prosecution of such desires, that fills the world with wickedness and misery? producing luxury and extravagance among some; poverty and wretchedness among others; hateful quarrels and vexatious suits between individuals and families; ravaging and desolating wars between princes and kingdoms; factions and tumults in the state; and, we may add, generally heresies and divisions in the church, as our apostle has somewhere classed *them* likewise among "the works of the

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"flesh[a]." Let not vain man, then, under the name and notion of philosophy, insult and revile, as a monkish and solitary principle that doctrine, on which the Son of God has thought proper to lay the deep foundations of his religion, the doctrine of self-denial. In the present state of human nature, the desires of *self* are frequently the sickly cravings of a distempered being; the gratification of them would tend only to increase and inflame the disease; and therefore, by our heavenly Physician, we are, in mercy, enjoined to "deny" them. All that he requesteth of us is, to consult our own happiness, and that of others; "let the desires that are contrary to the "commands of the Gospel be examined, and it will "be found that they cannot be satisfied without "hurting human society[b];" and if we are commanded to renounce worldly lusts, it is because they have deluged the earth with sin and sorrow.

From the negative part of the apostle's description we pass on to that which is positive. Having "denied ungodliness and worldly lusts," we are to live, in the first place, "soberly," σωφρονως. The noun, from whence this adverb is formed, signifies one of a *sound mind*, one that is master of himself, having his appetites and passions in due order and subjection; since of every one of these, if suffered to domineer instead of obeying, may be said what has been often said of one of them, that it is a temporary madness. Thus, when the prodigal in the parable is

[a] Gal. v. 20.

[b] Le Clerc on the Causes of Incredulity, part ii. chap. vi.

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described, as repenting of his profligacy, the expression is, προς σεαυτον ηλθε, *he came to himself*. The phrase intimates that, while engaged in his former course, he was *not himself*. The governing principle had been dethroned, and he had been carried away captive at the will of his conquerors. The question, therefore, will stand thus; whether they are likely to make the best members of society, who possess the use of their reason, or they who have lost it?

If we consider sobriety as implying the regulation of our appetites, it supplies us with the virtues of temperance as opposed to intemperance of every kind, and industry as opposed to sloth. And where is the state that would not wish all its subjects to be temperate and industrious? Look at the generations of old, and consult the ages that are past. Inquire of kingdoms that were once mighty upon earth, and of empires that now live only in the records of history. Ask them, and with one voice they will tell you, that by these virtues they all rose to greatness, glory, and honour; by their contraries they sunk into ruin, shame, and reproach. Learn we, then, as good citizens, duly to value the religion that, upon the grounds of true reason and eternal wisdom, with such persuasive energy recommends and enjoins the practice of these virtues, holding them forth to view in the example of our Divine Master and those of his first followers. A glutton, a drunkard, a debauchee, a sluggard, are monsters in the Gospel system. There we see a religion which is, all over, sobriety and purity, fervour and alacrity. There we

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find prescribed to us strict temperance always, prudent abstinence often. And why? That we may not be brought under the power of an appetite, and enslaved to so merciless and unrelenting a tyrant. There we are directed, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God; as if the world were one vast temple, and every good man, through the course of his actions, a kind of perpetual officiating priest in it. There none are permitted to be idle; every one is to be active and diligent in some employment, not only innocent, but useful to the community. If any do not *work*, it is declared that he should not *eat*; and the portion of the *unprofitable* is said to be with that of the *disobedient*.

But sobriety goes farther. It comprehends the government not of the bodily appetites only, but of the *passions* and affections of the mind. The use of these is, to stir up the soul, and put it upon action, to awaken the understanding, to excite the will, and to make the whole man vigorous and attentive in the prosecution of his designs. He whose designs are right, and who, being master of his passions, can direct their force that way, proceeds like the mariner who understands his compass, and commands the winds: he raises or sinks his affections according to his judgement, and carefully adjusts them to the nature of things: he applies them with all their energy, to the prosecution of his interest; and makes them militate, with all their force, against whatever might obstruct it[c]. Christianity informs us of the proper

[c] See Dr. Heylyn's Dissertation on the Passions, in his Theological Lectures, vol. i. p. 61.

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objects on which the passions should be fixed; and enables us to fix them on those objects. Its injunction runs thus—"Set your affections on things "above;" on objects in the pursuit of which they may put forth all their strength, and in the enjoyment of which they may acquiesce with absolute complacency. These are the objects to which they were originally adapted; and therefore, till possessed of them, they are unquiet and dissatisfied. In vain do they seek their full gratification in things below, in earthly objects, not calculated to afford it; and when they are set upon such, otherwise than in perfect subordination to the better things above, the man becomes a sure prey to disappointment and vexation[d]. Upon this principle, the Gospel, in the heart where it is received, moderates and regulates the passions, in their application to terrestrial objects. It restrains the sallies of anger that it sin not, and stops the issues of dislike: it represses insolence in joy, and prevents clamour or despondency in grief: it forbids presumption in hope, and bridles the impetuosity of desire: it permits not fear to transgress the bounds of a prudent caution, and mitigates even courage, which without it becomes a savage ferocity: it balances the mind in every state and fortune: it produces modesty, meekness, patience, candour, impartiality; and, out of these ingredients, forms that *sobriety* of character intended by our apostle. And what is it but this same sobriety, this command of the passions, this self-go-

[d] See this point made out, by a copious induction of particulars, in Dr. Young's True Estimate of Human Life.

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vernment, that qualifies a man to discharge properly all the relative duties of life; that endears him to a community, and renders him a truly useful and valuable member of society? Destitute of this, what is the world, as agitated by human passions, let loose, without restraint, in their fury, but a troubled sea, with the four winds striving on it for the mastery; where all is froth and foam, noise and confusion!

From that part of man's duty which regards himself, expressed by the word σωφρόνως, we pass to that which respects his neighbour, pointed out by the term δικαίως, "We should live soberly, righ-"teously," or justly; that is, according to the proper and original meaning of the word, giving to all their due. What that due is, the Gospel hath ascertained, not, like the mere moralists, by a system of rules only, but by infusing a principle which reduces the law to a compend, and teaches the whole at once, in its utmost extent. The principle here meant is charity, which, when sincere and ardent, needeth not the assistance of precepts, and directions at every turn, but by its own nature and force supersedes, and even goes beyond, them all[e]. "For "this," says our apostle elsewhere, "Thou shalt "not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou "shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, "thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other "commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this

[e] See Lord Bacon's Advancement of Learning, book vii. chap. iii.

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"saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as "thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; "therefore love is the fulfilling of the law[f]." It can do no ill, and will do all the good in its power. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—"Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, "do ye even so unto them." Let every man allow that claim of right in another which he shall think himself entitled to make in like circumstances—a precept this, which enables every man to be his own casuist, and puts it out of his power to determine unjustly: a precept which should be engraved on every heart, as it was, by the command of the emperor Severus, on his palace and public buildings; the universal rule of life, and moral directory of the world! Reflect, what an appearance society would wear, if men acted upon this evangelical principle. In superiors it would be equity and moderation, courtesy and affability, benignity and condescension: in inferiors, sincerity and fidelity, respect and diligence. In princes, justice, gentleness, and solicitude for the welfare of their subjects: in subjects, loyalty, submission, obedience, quietness, peace, patience, and cheerfulness. In parents, tenderness, carefulness of their children's good education, comfortable subsistence, and eternal welfare; in children, duty, honour, gratitude. In all men, upon all occasions, a readiness to assist, to relieve, to comfort one another[g].—Can we help exclaiming

[f] Rom. xiii. 9.

[g] See Dr. Barrow on the Profitableness of Godliness, vol. i. sermon 2d.

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with the celebrated author of *the Spirit of Laws*— "How admirable the religion, which, while it seems "only to have in view the felicity of the other life, "constitutes the happiness of this[h]!"—"How good "and how pleasant would it be, for brethren to "dwell together in unity," under the influence of this celestial principle, diffusing itself through all the members of a community, from the highest to the lowest, grateful as "the precious ointment upon "the head, that ran down upon the beard, even "upon Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts "of his garment;" cheering and refreshing "as the "dew of Hermon, or that which fell on the moun-"tains of Sion."

We have considered man's duty to himself and to his neighbour: he is to live "soberly and righteously." He is also to live godly, ευσεβως. The word conveys the idea of every thing that relates to the acknowledgement and worship of God; of devotion, piety, or of religion, properly so called, as distinguished from morality. Here it is, that we must look for the main spring and principle of action: for motives to virtue, capable of controlling the appetites, regulating the passions, and overcoming every obstacle objected by self-love to the practice of justice and charity among men. "Godliness, ευσεβεια, is "profitable unto all things, having promise of the life "that now is, as well as of that which is to come[i]:" and they who assert religion to have been the invention of priests or politicians, to keep the world in

[h] Spirit of Laws, book xxiv. chap. iii.

[i] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

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order, do thereby confess that it is, at least, good for that purpose.

Of human words and actions, highly pernicious to society, how many are there not cognizable at an earthly tribunal! Yet our happiness or misery, in our converse with others, depends upon the regulation of these. Now, implant but a thorough sense of religion in the mind; teach a man always to consider himself as acting, speaking, nay, even thinking, under the eye of that Being who seeth in secret, but will one day reward or punish openly; you stop the streams at the place of breaking forth, and staunch, at once, the fountain of corruption.

Of crimes that are cognizable by courts of judicature, how few would fall under their sentence, were it not for the obligation which religion lays upon those persons to speak the truth, by whose evidence the facts in question must be proved and ascertained?

There is a connexion between religion and morality, like that between soul and body, not to be dissolved without the death of the latter. Speculative men may amuse themselves and others with disquisitions on the beauty of virtue and the relations of things, independently of the will of God and the motives suggested by the Scriptures. Virtue, without doubt, is beautiful; and there are relations of things, with corresponding duties resulting therefrom. But will these considerations charm to rest the eager appetites and turbulent passions of human nature in its present condition? "As well might you "think to bind an hungry tiger with a thread."

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But observe the firm basis on which is for ever fixed the morality of the Gospel. How clear in its principles! how powerful in its motives!—"We love "God, because he first loved us, and gave his Son "to be the propitiation for our sins. If God so "loved us, we ought also to love one another. For "he that loveth him who begat, loveth him also "who is begotten of him." The head of the most unlearned cannot but comprehend the meaning of these few words; and the heart of the most learned must feel the force of them. Such is the ground of that charity which, as we before observed, performeth every duty of social life, and fulfilleth the law. To inculcate and produce in us this heavenly disposition, is the end of the Gospel, and of all its doctrines. It is deduced in Scripture even from those that may seem to be of the most mysterious and speculative nature; the unity of the divine Persons; the divinity and the satisfaction of Christ; doctrines, which cannot, therefore, be denied, or degraded, without removing, or proportionably lessening the most endearing and affecting incitements to the Christian life[k]. Indeed the happy temper of which we are speaking, is the natural and kindly effect of the great evangelical truths, when treasured up in the mind, and made the subjects of frequent meditation. The ideas of a reconciled God; a Saviour and Intercessor on high; a gracious Spirit, informing our ignorance, purifying our hearts, relieving

[k] See Dr. Waterland's imcomparable tract on the Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, chap. ii.

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our necessities, alleviating our cares, and comforting our sorrows—such ideas as these enable us to bridle the appetites of the body, and to calm the emotions of the mind; to bear with patience and cheerfulness the calamities of life; they sweeten the temper, and harmonize the affections, resolving them all into one, diversified according to the different situation of its proper object; of which grief laments the absence, and fear apprehends the loss; desire pursues it; hope has it in view; anger rises against obstruction; and joy triumphs in possession[l]. Thus religion fixes the heart on its treasure, in faith without wavering, and resignation without reserve: it draws the affections upwards towards heaven, as the sun does the exhalations of the earth, to return in fruitful showers, and bless the world.

Such, then, is the friendly aspect which Christianity, as represented by the apostle in the text, evidently bears to the true interests of civil society. Yet a noble writer[m] has objected it to the Gospel, that by confining a man's views to himself and his spiritual concerns, it causeth him to slight the social affections, as things appertaining to this world, and of little moment. The reverse, as we have seen, is the truth. A discharge of all the social duties in this world is, by the Gospel, pointed out as the way to promote true self-interest, and to obtain salvation in the world to come. For the performance of these duties, the doctrines of Christianity supply

[l] See Dr. Heylyn's Discourses, vol. ii. p. 5.
[m] The Earl of Shaftesbury.

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new motives; and the grace which accompanies it endues us with new powers.

The same noble author complains, that there is in the Gospel no mention made of private friendship. Surely, if it be among those things that are "lovely, "and virtuous, and praise-worthy," it is commanded, and will be rewarded. Evangelical principles extend it farther, and cement it better, than all others. The Saviour of the world styles his disciples, friends; and, among them, there was one, on account of his heavenly temper and disposition, more peculiarly favoured and beloved than the rest. Christianity procures, for its sincere professor, the friendship of God; and incites him, in imitation of his dear Lord and Master, to deserve a more glorious title than ever adorned the imperial diadem—the friend of mankind.

It is yet again made matter of complaint, by the aforesaid author, that public spirit, or the love of our country, is passed over in silence by the Gospel. That passion for the supposed glory of their country, which led the Romans to carry war into all the kingdoms around them, is not, indeed, inculcated by the Gospel. Had it been so, Jesus, in conformity to his doctrine, must have put himself at the head of the Jewish armies; and it would soon have appeared, that the Son of man came not to save men's lives, but to destroy them. If the love of our country signifies a true and affectionate concern for the public good, whither can we go for an example of it in its highest exaltation, better than to the character of our Lord? He was born for his people; he laboured for them; he preached for them; he mourned for them;

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he wept for them; he lived for them—and, to crown all, he DIED for them.—And blessed are those servants, whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find to be, or to have been, employed like himself, in endeavouring to promote the temporal welfare of the community, no less than the eternal salvation of individuals, by turning their fellow-citizens from sin to righteousness, and bringing them to the knowledge and obedience of the heavenly law. This is a species of patriotism disinterested and unsuspected: applauding angels view it with delight; and by the Lord of angels it will be had in honourable and everlasting remembrance.

The celebrated sceptic, Bayle, had asserted, that true Christians could not form a government of any duration[n]. "Why not?" replies Montesquieu—"Citizens of this profession being infinitely enlight-"ened with respect to the various duties of life, and "having the warmest zeal to fulfil them, must be "perfectly sensible of the rights of natural defence.

[n] Plotinus, as we are told by Porphyry, desired the emperor Gallienus to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, and to give it to the philosophers, proposing to dwell there himself, with his disciples, and to establish Plato's republic. But though he was much in the emperor's favour, his project met with opposition at court, and came to nothing. Thus philosophy, as Tillemont observes, though patronized by princes, could never, in any age, introduce its rules even into one city; and Jesus Christ hath established his all over the world, in spite of all worldly opposition from the great and learned.—A republic of modern deists and moral philosophers would be as great a curiosity as this city of philosophers would have been, but perhaps not quite so well regulated. Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 376.

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"The more they believe themselves indebted to re-
"ligion, the more they would think due to their
"country. The principles of Christianity, deeply
"engraved on the heart, would be infinitely more
"powerful than the false honour of monarchies,
"than the humane virtues of republics, or the ser-
"vile fear of despotic states. And the Christian
"religion, which ordains that men should love each
"other, would, without doubt, have every nation
"blest with the best civil, the best political laws;
"because these, next to this religion, are the great-
"est good that men can give and receive[o]."

The last objection that shall be mentioned, as made against the Gospel, relative to the present subject—for I fear I begin to trespass upon your patience—is one which is very frequently made, and therefore ought not to pass entirely unnoticed. It is this, that Christianity seems often not only to have failed in its design of removing evils from society, but to have been, itself, the cause of introducing some of the worst, as it has given birth to religious controversies, factions, persecutions, wars, massacres, and the like.

The author of the Spirit of Laws has returned in few words, and in his usual masterly manner, the proper answer to this objection—"To say that re-
"ligion is not a restraining motive, because it does
"not always restrain, is equally absurd as to say
"that the civil laws are not a restraining motive.
"It is a false way of reasoning against religion, to

[o] Spirit of Laws, b. xxiv. chap. i. and vi.

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"collect, in a large work, a long detail of the evils "it has produced[p], if we do not give, at the same "time, an enumeration of the advantages which "have flowed from it. Were I to relate all the "evils that have arisen in the world from civil laws "and civil government, I might tell you of frightful "things. The question is not to know whether it "would be better that a certain man, or a certain "people, had no religion, than to abuse what they "have; but to know which is the least evil, that re-"ligion be sometimes abused, or that there be no "such restraint as religion on mankind[q]." Nothing can be more judicious and solid than this reply, as far as it goes. A consideration or two may be added.

The Gospel has not always produced its proper effects—Through whose fault has this happened? God gave religion, as he gave the earth, to man, that in peace and comfort he might cultivate and reap the fruits of it. Instead of so doing, man lays it waste, and drenches it in blood. Can we blame God, or the earth, or religion? No; to man alone the blame is due; on men alone let it, then, be laid.

The Gospel has not always produced its proper

[p] This is the method invariably pursued, in the numerous novels and other tracts of Voltaire. When one considers for what end such talents were given, and to what purpose they have been, for so many years together, applied——

Quis, talia fando,
Temperet a lachrymis!

[q] Spirit of Laws, b. xxiv. chap. ii.

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effects. It was foreknown, it was foretold, that it would not. Nothing has fallen out new; nothing contrary to the expectation of its divine Author and his servants. Christianity would have all men to be temperate, sober, pure, industrious, meek, peaceable, just, and loving; in which case, Paradise would again spring up amongst us, and earth would be a lively image of heaven. In one word, were it perfectly obeyed, it would establish the happiness that is attainable here below; and to it, imperfectly as it is practised, is owing the quietness, security, and good order, that a great part of the world now enjoys.

But, after all, the argument against religion, drawn from the bad conduct of its professors, though not conclusive, will always be prevalent; and though many good answers may be given to it, the best of all would be, to forsake our sins, and amend our ways. Our good actions would then speak for us, and wipe off this imputation cast upon our faith. It was a singular honour and advantage to the cause of Christianity, that its ancient writers, in their apologies for it, could address themselves to the Romans in such words as these—We are grown so many in number, that if we were only to withdraw ourselves from your dominions, we should ruin you; you could not subsist without us. Yet is our innocence as remarkable as our increase. Your jails swarm with criminals of your own religion: but you shall not find there one Christian, unless he be there because he is a Christian, and purely on account of

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his faith[r]. We are not, it will be said, in these days, to expect a return of the golden age of religion. But this may be said, and said with truth, that we know not what may be done, till we have made the experiment; that it is in every man's power to take off his share of the objection; and if every man were to do so, the whole would be removed.

Let us, then, awake,—and, from the rising up of the sun to the going down of the same, call all the world to awake with us to righteousness—kings of the earth, and all people; princes and all rulers of the world; high and low, rich and poor, one with another. It is righteousness which "exalteth a nation;" it is righteousness which "establisheth a throne." Do we desire to live in felicity, and would we fain see good days? Would the prince have the subject loyal and obedient? Would the master have his servant honest and observant? Would the parent have his child dutiful and grateful? Would every man have his friend faithful and kind; his neighbour benevolent and charitable? Let all, without delay, become, in truth, disciples of the holy Jesus, and take away his reproach among men, by studying to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." But chiefly we of the clergy, who are ordained to the administration, and set for the defence of the Gospel; we who are stationed in these illustrious and far-renowned seminaries, that have long been the delight of the nations,

[r] Dr. Jortin's Discourses concerning the truth of the Christian Religion, p. 169.

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and a praise in the earth; here to behold the future ornaments of their country, and protectors of its establishment, growing up under our care—we are more especially obliged to show forth, not only with our lips, but in our lives, the praises of him who hath brought us to his marvellous light; and appointed us to publish the glad tidings of his salvation to the sons of men. Religion, bad as the times were supposed and feared to be, hath not wanted friends, among the governors of Israel, who willingly offered themselves to stand forth in her cause. The fences of the vineyard have been happily secured. Let the vine yield its produce, grateful to God and man; that while some are as "plants grown up in "their youth," others may "bring forth more fruit "in their age."—"So let thy work, O Lord, appear "unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their child-"ren. And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God "be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands "upon us, O prosper thou our handy-work!"

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DISCOURSE XXXII.

THE GOOD STEWARD.

ACTS, XX. 35.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

THE words are cited by St. Paul, as those of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They occur not in any of the Gospels, but descended, as we may suppose, by tradition, from the persons to whom they were originally addressed. The truth contained in them was deemed too important to be forgotten, and the apostle was therefore commissioned by Providence to gather up this precious fragment of the bread of life, that it might not be lost.

The virtue which we are now assembled to contemplate, in order to practise it, is often by our Lord and his disciples enjoined as our duty. In the passage now read over, it is recommended, as our interest; our present, no less than our future interest.

It hath been justly observed concerning those passages in the Gospel, which dictate abstinence and self-denial, that their import is only this, "Do "thyself no harm." With equal truth and propriety may it be affirmed of the precepts relative to the subject before us, that they all terminate in the follow-

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ing most wholesome piece of advice, "Do thyself "good:" do good to thyself, by doing good to others. Felicity is the daughter of beneficence; and he who makes his neighbour happy, is always, himself, the happier man of the two. There is a more heartfelt satisfaction, a more solid comfort, a more lively and lasting joy in bestowing, than there can be in accepting relief. "It is more blessed to give than to re-"ceive." A nobler maxim, surely, was never propounded, to influence the conduct of the human race. Were the experiment universally made, it would universally succeed; the unequal distribution of Heaven's favours would no longer be complained of, the days of Eden would return upon earth, and the next life begin in this.

It is impossible to place our subject in a more advantageous light; a light, in which, perhaps, it hath been less frequently viewed. Permit me, therefore, to prosecute so engaging and promising a speculation; since, if duty and pleasure can be brought to coincide, all difficulties are solved, and the controversy is for ever at an end.

Happiness is man's aim, from his birth to his death. But, amongst the men of the world, the question still remains to be answered, "Where shall it be "found, or where is the place thereof?" The earth and the sea have been ransacked for it; but they say, it is not in them. The high-born sons of ambition, the low-minded children of avarice, and the giddy votaries of dissipation, return from the chase, jaded and disappointed. A phantom appeared to delude them, as they will all tell us, in their more serious

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moments, which fled as they pursued, and vanished when they approached to embrace it. Let us point out to them a more excellent way; let us bring them in sight of something real and substantial; let us prevail upon them to seek happiness by doing good. They have in vain attempted to become blessed by receiving: if they would become indeed so, it must be by giving.

Strange as this position may, at first sight, appear, it is evidently intimated to us, by the operation of that principle implanted in our nature, which we commonly style instinct. Consider the toil and the solicitude undergone, the anxious days and the wakeful nights passed by the tender parent, in the care of her infant offspring. Yet even here, though so painfully employed, will she not tell you she experienceth a joy, for which the whole world, if offered in exchange, would be instantly rejected with disdain? Her charge, feeble and helpless as it is, can make her no returns. Only she procures ease and comfort for her child, and its happiness constitutes her own. Such are the objects relieved and supported by us. They are, in some sort, our work, our production, our adopted children, the creatures we have, as it were, formed, and to whom, under God, we have restored life; life, which must otherwise have been dragged on, or lost, in misery and sorrow.

Thus, again, with regard to every connexion friendship induces us to form in society; we seek not the satisfaction alone of being esteemed or beloved, but that of exciting in another the sentiments which delight ourselves. The end of the affection is, to

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render its object happy, and so to be happy in reflection.

Whence that general wish in every civilized person, to make himself agreeable to those around him, and recommend himself to their good opinion? It is a tacit acknowledgement that we must please others, if we would be pleased ourselves.

To what end serves that passion in the human breast, which causes us to sympathize with sorrow, and moves our bowels within us to yearn over distress? It affords us, in our own feelings, a demonstration of the proposition contained in the text. It forces us to seek for blessedness in liberality. It inflicts misery upon us, till we have alleviated that of our brother.

The inequality of mankind, ordained by Providence for this end, among others, offers to us continually the opportunities of thus becoming happy. We are unhappy, because we neglect to seize and improve them; since it is an uncontrovertible truth, that as no man was ever happy, while employed in making others miserable; so none was ever miserable while employed in making others happy: and he was a wise as well as a good prince, who declared the day to be lost that was not marked in the calendar of beneficence. To his character the imperial diadem could add no dignity.

With the advantages possessed by different persons it should be as with the commodities produced by different countries; the abundance of one should supply the necessities of another. God formed the human heart to be the dispenser of blessings, which

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are sure to return to it again, in the course of circulation. He made man for society, and designed not that he should be happy alone.

We may be convinced, by a little reflection, that the gifts of Heaven, poured in ever such profusion around him, cannot make him so. Self is an idol, that can contribute no more to its own well-being, than the idols worshipped of old. Take a man out of the world, place him in solitude, and you will see, that all the supposed sources of felicity fail at once. Invest him with power: there are none on whom it can be exercised. Fill his treasury with gold and silver: they have lost all their value. Let him possess the highest reputation: there is no one to regard it. Bestow upon him the abilities of an angel: they will prey upon themselves, for want of other materials. Adorn him with every accomplishment: every accomplishment will be useless. Nay, of piety itself, practised only in solitude, it has been remarked by an elegant writer, that, "like the flower "blooming in the desert, it may give its fragrance "to the winds of heaven, and delight those unbodied "spirits that survey the works of God and the actions "of men; but it bestows no assistance upon earthly "beings, and however free from the taints of im-"purity, yet wants the sacred splendour of benefi-"cence." The gifts of God, unless diffused to others, become unprofitable to the owner. To be enjoyed, they must be communicated, and taken upon the rebound.

Let us now, therefore, conduct our candidate for happiness back into society, with his possessions and

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talents, and let us show him, how he must employ them for the attainment of his end. They *may* be employed to the prejudice, they *should* be employed for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, or he will live and die in a state of disappointment and vexation.

Power, by the little satisfaction it otherwise affords, will quickly convince him to whom it has been committed, that it was not given to gratify himself at the expense of those under his command, but to be exercised for their advantage. Heroes were thought, of old, to be the sons of the Deity. But he did not send them from above, to seize and divide kingdoms, to ravage provinces, to sack towns, and destroy the unfortunate. They came to relieve misery, to succour distress, and to be a blessing to their fellow-citizens and countrymen. Sometimes, indeed, they could not become such but by resisting and vanquishing their common enemies. But the glory of conquest is always stained with blood. It can only be acquired by carnage and death. Many may rejoice and triumph; but many must mourn and be undone. Glory, pure and spotless, is that which results from felicity procured and bestowed. This is to conquer hearts; and to conquer *them*, is to reign indeed. Government cannot stand on a firmer basis, than the love of the subject. It is at the same time the security and the comfort of the prince; his shield, and his reward[a].

Wherein consisteth the happiness attendant on

[a] See the admirable essays of the late good king Stanislaus, printed at Paris, under the title of *Le Philosophe Bienfaisant*, from whence many of the sentiments in this discourse are taken.

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wealth? In the toil with which it is acquired? As reasonably might we search after it in the mines or in the galleys. In contemplating it when acquired? The world itself, for once, passes a right judgement, and despiseth the wretch who seeks it there. In hazarding it at the gaming-table? The pleasures afforded by the rack are as eligible: the discipline of Eastern hermits was mild and indulgent, compared with the pains and penances, the anxieties and horrors, with which those vigils are kept. In procuring the means of riot and excess? But they prey upon the strength, and depress the spirits. If the rich man would enjoy a sound mind in a healthy body (and who can be called happy that doth not?) he must live like the poor man; he must attain and preserve them by temperance and exercise, that is, by labour and abstinence, abstinence from food of such quality, and in such quantity, as his appetite would provoke him to take down. What advantage then, you will say, have the rich? And are they not, after all, happier than the poor? Undoubtedly they are; and for this reason—because "it is more blessed to give "than to receive."

We are told of a philosopher who threw his money into the sea, lest it should corrupt its master. The action has been much applauded, but it may be questioned whether it afforded any proof of his proficiency. Rightly used, others might have been the better, himself the happier, and not the less virtuous, for it.

On a like principle, for many centuries, numbers of Christians, in order to be perfect, left all, and retired into the wilderness. Indeed, in those dread-

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ful days, when, under the Heathen emperors, the furnace of persecution was heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated, we can blame none who endeavoured to get out of the reach of such tremendous flames. What began by necessity, was afterwards continued by choice. To avoid a defeat, the soldiers of Jesus betook themselves to flight. But, surely, the Christian hero should engage and conquer. He who is furnished with the ability to do good, should continue in the world, where good is to be done. The man of opulence, what is he but steward to the Sovereign Proprietor of all things? It cannot be his duty to forsake those of the household over which he is placed; and it should be his delight to take care of them. God grudges him not the necessaries, the conveniences, the comforts of life for himself; but only directs him, wisely and graciously directs him, to promote his Lord's glory, and his own happiness, by extending his concern to all around him. He who, in such circumstances, will not be persuaded so to do, should recollect, that the hour is coming, and must soon come, when it shall be said unto him, by a messenger, who will admit no excuse, and brook no delay, "Give an account of thy stew-"ardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward."

The talents of the mind, whether natural, acquired, or infused from above, stand on the same foot with power and riches. They are given, as an apostle informs us, "to profit withal;" to profit others; to lead men into the paths of wisdom and virtue, of religion and piety. Genius and learning, employed for

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a long course of years, in seducing the minds of men to infidelity, and exciting their passions to vice, afford but a melancholy retrospect to declining age. The bitterest reflection we can have to make in our last hours, is this, that mankind are the worse for us; next to it is the reflection, that they are not the better. Wouldst thou, then, be blessed *in* thy mental endowments? Take care that thy brethren be blessed *by* them.

Thus hath God ordained it to be, in every instance. Nor can it be otherwise, if the blessedness of man consisteth in a resemblance of his Maker. He is himself the most beneficent of beings, and he is the happiest. He giveth all, and he can receive nothing, but the humble acknowledgements, the grateful praises, of his creatures. He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness. The eyes of all wait upon him, the whole family in heaven and earth looketh up to him for a supply of every want, and he giveth them their food in due season. He clothes the pastures with flocks, the hills with woods, the gardens with flowers, and the valleys with corn. By him, through him, in him, we live, and move, and have our being. Power, riches, and wisdom are his, and they are all exerted for the good of man. He is mighty, but he is mighty to save; his riches are the riches of mercy and grace, and his wisdom plans our welfare. He would have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth. He is pleased to represent his own happiness as depending on that of his people; he is

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described as rejoicing when it is well with them; as grieving when it is otherwise. Can the book which so describes him be other than divine?

If the glory of the Godhead be too dazzling an object for the eyes of frail mortality steadfastly to behold, view that glory veiled in human nature. Consider the author and finisher of our salvation, Christ Jesus. He gave himself for us. He came down from Heaven to give life to the world, from which he received only persecution, sorrow, pain, and death. Yet the delight afforded him by his employment was an overbalance for his sufferings. It was his refreshment, and his support, through the course of his pilgrimage. "My meat," saith he, "is to do my "Father's will, and to finish his work." He "went "about, doing good." His life was ever active, and ever useful. Living, he preached, wherever he came, the doctrine of salvation; dying, he bore his last testimony to its truth. For the suffering of death crowned with honour, invested with all power, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, like his bright representative in the firmament, he diffuses light and life unto the ends of the earth; he reigns and shines for the benefit of the world: and, in so doing, he is pronounced and proclaimed, by every creature, "blessed for evermore."

The considerations which have been offered may, it is humbly hoped, suffice to evince the truth of the proposition in the text, and to demonstrate, that felicity is the offspring of beneficence. The properties of this felicity will deserve your notice.

It is immediate. The husbandman, in this case,

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waits not, as in others, a long season, for his harvest. In sowing he reaps. Nay, the very desire of doing good, the very first thought of that kind, which springs up in the soul, brings with it its own abundant reward; it produces a pleasure unknown to those who erect their happiness on the miseries of others, or who make the happiness of others a source of misery to themselves.

It is exquisite and unalloyed. It is the only pleasure attended and followed by no satiety and disgust, no trouble, no bitterness, no remorse, no repentance. Our bounty, you will say perhaps, may be ineffectual, or its objects may prove ungrateful. Ingratitude may diminish its value to the receiver, but not to the giver: he has done his best, and his work is with his God, who causes the sun to arise and the rain to descend on the fields of those that acknowledge him not.

It is secure; it may be called one's own. A stranger intermeddleth not with it, to disturb it: the thief cannot break through, and steal it away.

It is durable. Mere earthly felicity of every kind, even the most innocent, like other terrestrial productions, involves in it the seeds of its own dissolution. There is a leaven in the lump, that will sour and corrupt it; there is a worm in the gourd, already at work to corrode and consume it. But the happiness now recommended to you never wastes nor diminishes; it increases in the enjoyment; it renders other pleasures needless, and supplies their place, growing every day more and more satisfactory and delightful; but most of all will it be found so in that

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day (not far from every one of us) when a solemn leave will be taken of the world, and its most celebrated pleasures; when all we have received must be parted with, and that alone will remain with us, which we have given away. Happy *then* the man, whose faith has been to him a tree of life, yielding this, its proper fruit; whose love of God has been evidenced by the love of his neighbour, who has lived not for himself, but for all that needeth his assistance. He shall welcome with cheerfulness the hour which appals the mightiest sinner, and strikes terror into the breast of the unprofitable servant. At that hour, with holy hope and humble confidence, he will lift up his eyes towards heaven, and say—Redeemed by thy blood, and separated from the pollutions of the world by thy Spirit, in thy name, and through thy grace, I have made it the business of my life to show kindness to others, even as thou hast shown kindness to me. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and think upon me for good. Lord, pardon my transgressions, and receive me to glory! What is the felicity, the empty, fleeting shadow of felicity, furnished by the possession of crowns and sceptres, palaces and kingdoms, compared to that of him, who, with these sentiments, is passing from time into eternity!

Let me therefore congratulate you on the opportunity this day offered of attaining what the world can neither give you, nor take from you. These candidates for your kindness, by the very circumstance of their being such, have it in their power to contribute more to your happiness, than it is possible for you to contribute to theirs.

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In passing through the streets of this spacious and magnificent metropolis, the emporium of the globe, there is no sight so pleasing, as that of the numerous and noble edifices rising on every side of us, for the reception and relief of poverty and misery; all the fair daughters of divine Charity, and each admirable in its way. "Many daughters "have done virtuously, but THOU"—if it be invidious to say, "excellest them all," though cha- "rity envieth not"—at least we must say—the experience of sixteen years warrants us to say it—art equal to any, in the selection and management of those who are so fortunate as to be the objects of thy care!

They are such as have, on all accounts, an indubitable claim to our compassionate regard. Deprived of every parental aid, both father and mother had forsaken them, when the Lord Almighty, the father of the fatherless, by your means took them up and supported them. Destitute of any abode upon the earth, wide and extensive as it is, your bounty provided for them a comfortable habitation; hungry and thirsty, you fed them, and gave them drink; naked, you clothed them: exposed continually to the wiles of those emissaries of the Destroyer, ever watchful and ever busy, who sleep not unless they have betrayed unwary innocence to prostitution, profligacy, shame, disease, and death; you snatched them, with an angel's hand, from ruin, and conducted them to a little Zoar, where their souls might live. In danger of every evil, into which idleness and ignorance could render them liable to fall, you employed and instructed them; instructed them in the principles of that

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religion which alone can make them faithful; that religion, which not only teaches, but infuses into its true disciples, the virtues of humility, modesty, meekness, patience, temperance, truth, and honesty. Happy they who are thus qualified and disposed to serve; happy the family which hath such to serve it; in these days more precious than gold; yea, than much fine gold. Having been well taught themselves, they will be able to teach others also, and their fellow-servants may receive everlasting benefit from them; nay, let it not be forgotten, that the general of the Syrian armies was, by a servant-maid, directed to a prophet, and induced to worship the Lord God of Israel. Our institution, in a word, seems to have been formed after the model of that heavenly love displayed, by the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, to lost mankind. He found *them* as fatherless children, the outcasts of Paradise, in a state of utter destitution: He opened for them a house of refuge, he fed them with celestial food, he gave them the water of life to drink, he clothed them with the garments of salvation, he instructed them in the way of righteousness, he trained them to obedience, and took them into his own service, which is perfect freedom, and leads to perfect bliss. How pleasant a thing it is to behold an assembly united as one person in the furtherance of so godlike a work! Wearied with the din of politics, and the noise of folly, here the soul rests and expatiates, as in her proper element. Councils and senates may bestow applause, but scenes like this administer comfort. Those may compliment the head, but these do honour to the heart. In the heraldry of heaven, goodness

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precedes greatness; and the patronage so early and with such effect vouchsafed to the Asylum, affords an illustrious instance upon earth, where the latter glories only in becoming instrumental to the former, esteeming IT MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.

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DISCOURSE XXXIII.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD MANIFESTED IN THE RISE AND FALL OF EMPIRES.

1 SAMUEL, II. 30.

Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

WHEN we peruse the instructive page of history, we behold empires in the world, like waves in the ocean, successively rising and disappearing again. Exalted for a moment, one glitters before our eyes in power and majesty; but is suddenly overwhelmed and absorbed by the superior force of another, which, itself, perhaps hardly stays to be gazed at, but as quickly vanishes from the sight, and is no more. In silence we contemplate the affecting scene. We adore the providence of him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men; who putteth down one and setteth up another; ordering all things according to the counsel of his own will.

From the sacred Scriptures we learn what that will is, and how gracious an aspect it always bears towards the servants of the true God. We see the

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most untractable of things and persons secretly working together for good to them that fear and worship the Creator of the universe. We perceive the potentates of the earth becoming subservient to the kingdom of the Messiah, and carrying on the dispensations of mercy and judgement towards his people, as their obedience, from time to time, pleads for the one, or their transgressions call for the other. Our hearts are filled and warmed with a sense of his goodness, who causeth the world and all that is in it to conspire in promoting the felicity of his chosen.

Considered in this light, let us take a view of the divine economy in the government of the world from the beginning, by an induction of those particular facts, together with the grounds and reasons of the same, with which we are furnished by history, sacred and profane. Such a view, it is humbly hoped, will not be an unpleasant employment of the time usually allotted upon these occasions. It cannot be an unprofitable one; since, by studying the ways of him who is perfect in knowledge and happiness, we shall best learn to rectify and regulate our own. And it will be found peculiarly adapted to answer the end proposed by the wisdom and piety of our ancestors, when they ordained, that the solemn administration of justice should commence with due and devout meditation on the proceedings of that Being, concerning whom it is said, that, as mercy and truth go before his face, so righteousness and judgement are the habitation of his throne.

A large and comprehensive, that is, a proper survey of the scheme of Providence, as formed upon the

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maxim laid down by God himself in the words of the text, must take its rise from that gracious purpose of saving mankind and bringing them to glory, which appears to have possessed the first place in the designs of Heaven. This we learn from the notices afforded in the Scriptures, that we are "saved and "called according to the divine purpose, and grace "given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began[a];" that God hath "chosen us from the beginning[b];" that the Lamb of God was slain, that is, intentionally and virtually slain "from the foundation of the "world[c]."

The world was enjoyed but for a little season by man in a state of innocence, and hath ever since sympathized with him in the misery of his fall. But it is still preserved, as the theatre on which the mighty work of redemption is carried on, until that work shall be accomplished. When "the fulness "of the Gentiles shall be come in, and all Israel shall "be saved[d]," "then the heavens shall pass away "with a great noise, and the elements shall melt "with fervent heat: the earth also and the works "that are therein shall be burnt up[e]."

Ere we have proceeded far in the most ancient and authentic of histories, we meet with a stupendous representation of that final destruction which awaits the present system, as well as of that complete salvation which shall be effected for the servants of the Most High. The earth was defiled by the abomina-

[a] 2 Tim. i. 9. [b] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [c] Rev. xiii. 8.
[d] Rom. xi. 25. [e] 2 Pet. iii. 10.

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tions of its inhabitants. The sins of men burst the fountains of the great deep, opened the windows of heaven, and called forth a deluge of water to cleanse it from its corruptions; when neither the riches of the wealthy, nor the power of the mighty, nor the wisdom of the wise, could avail to preserve them from the hand of death. Then appeared the incomparable pre-eminence of religion, the inestimable privileges of the faithful. Safe under the protection of the Almighty, the holy family in the ark survived the storm that laid the world in ruins, and passed in perfect security over the wreck of universal nature. A new earth, as it were, arose out of the waters. The covenant was renewed. Men were commanded to look upon the bow in the clouds, and to remember the promise. The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.

Behold those ancient fathers of our faith, the patriarchs, because iniquity again abounded, called forth from their country and their kindred to preserve true religion upon earth, "till the Seed should "come, to whom the promise was made." "They "were but few men in number, yea very few, and "strangers in the land." But the presence of God was with them. "He suffered no man to do them "wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm[f]." They were honoured in the kingdoms through which they travelled. When injured, they by faith "put to flight the armies of

[f] Psalm cv. 12.

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"aliens." They were permitted to intercede for cities, and when destruction became inevitable, yet such as belonged to them were sent out of the overthrow. They became instruments of preserving whole nations alive in the time of dearth. They informed princes concerning the will of Heaven, and taught senators true wisdom. They were revered by crowned heads, and Pharaoh disdained not to receive a blessing from Jacob.

Egypt, a kingdom, in those days, the most renowned of all others for power and learning, became a scene of very remarkable transactions. The sighs and groans of afflicted Israel came up before the eternal throne. The Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and made bare his arm in the defence of his people. The persecutor still withstood that power which controlled all the operations of nature; and hardened his head against that goodness, which, by so doing, called him to repentance. At length, the jaws of oppression were broken, and the people of God were delivered. The Egyptian sank, like lead, in the mighty waters; while Israel, triumphant on the opposite shore, sang hallelujahs to the Lord God Omnipotent.

The descendants of faithful Abraham, thus brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, were conducted through the wilderness, the same Lord being their light and their strength, their support and their comfort, and came to the borders of Canaan, at the precise time when the iniquity of the Amorites was full. The day of trial allotted to the idolatrous nations being expired, a gloomy and

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tempestuous night closed upon them for ever. The judgement determined in the decrees of heaven was executed by the sword of God in the hand of Joshua. The promise was made good—"I will never leave "thee, nor forsake thee." The power of faith prevailed, to the casting down of strong holds; and the blast of trumpets, sounded by the divine command, was found sufficient to level the walls of Jericho.

As often as the children of Israel, after their establishment in Canaan, rebelled against the Lord their God, he punished them by means of the neighbouring nations. When they returned to him, his favour returned to them; the light of his countenance soon dispelled the darkest clouds of public calamity, and brake forth upon them, by means of deliverers, raised up to chastise the insolence of their enemies, and to restore tranquillity and happiness in the dwellings of Jacob.

The prosperity of Israel was at its height in the days of Solomon, to whose court we see the sovereigns of the earth resorting, astonished at his glory, charmed and edified by his wisdom. Jerusalem was the praise of the nations, and the joy of the whole earth. Peace resided within her walls, and plenteousness within her palaces; while, in the midst of her, on the favoured mount, shone, like the sun in the firmament, the house of the Lord her God, where he was worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Let us contemplate the noble idea, intended, surely, to be conveyed by this reign, of the state of things which is to take place when the last enemy shall be vanquished, and death swallowed up in victory; when the Son of

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David shall manifest himself in the new Jerusalem, as the Prince of Peace, and reign for ever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords.

After this period, we find the Almighty employing, in their turns, the celebrated monarchies of the world, to protect or to annoy, to cherish or to chastise his people, or each other, as there was occasion.

The idolatries and iniquities of the ten tribes, consequent upon their defection from the house of David, and the service of the temple at Jerusalem, called for vengeance. And lo, the Assyrian stands in readiness to execute it, awaiting, as it were, his orders from above. At the time appointed, they are issued. The Lord lifted up an ensign to the nations from afar, and mustered the host to the battle, making them the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land. Because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other Gods, therefore the Lord was angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. They returned no more to that pleasant land, nor saw again their native country.

The case of the Assyrian affords a remarkable instance of the manner in which God uses the instrumentality of man's free choice foreseen, and thus causes all the machinations of worldly politicians to work together for the accomplishment of his designs, while they attend only to the furtherance of their own. For thus God has been pleased to state the matter, once for all, by his prophet Isaiah: "The "Assyrian is the rod of mine anger, and the staff

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"in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him "against an hypocritical nation, and against the "people of my wrath will I give him a charge to "take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them "down like the mire in the streets. Howbeit, he mean-"eth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in "his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few[g]." The proud Assyrian knew not (what Isaiah could have told him), that Jehovah, having performed by his hand the work of correcting a rebellious people, would afterwards punish likewise his own stout heart, and the glory of his high looks[h]: he perceived not the absurdity of the axe presuming to boast itself against the person that heweth therewith[i]. View him before the walls of Jerusalem, at the head of an army supposed to be invincible, opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, and already rioting in the fancied spoil of the holy city. But the time was not yet come. A prince filled the throne who knew whither to recur for assistance, and possessed the valuable secret of engaging Heaven on his side. Therefore, "the virgin, the daughter of Sion, "despised the tyrant, and laughed him to scorn; "the daughter of Jerusalem shook her head at him[k]." Suddenly, at midnight, without noise or violence, the flower of the Assyrian army is cut off at a stroke. The Almighty puts his hook in the nose, and his bridle in the lips, of the raging monster, and leads him back, like a wild beast taken in the toils, con-

[g] Isa. x. 5, 6, &c.
[h] Ibid. ver. 12.
[i] Ibid. 15.
[k] Isa. xxxvii. 22.

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temned and hissed at by those who had so lately trembled at his power.

But, at length, the hour arrived of Judah's chastisement. The transgressions of her kings, of her priests, and of her people, had made the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint. She was to drink deep of the cup of the Lord's fury, and the haughty Nebuchadnezzar was the person appointed to administer it. Jerusalem is laid in ashes, and her children go into captivity. In the school of affliction they are taught the lesson of repentance. "By the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept;" wept over their calamities, and the sins which occasioned them; "yea they wept, when they remem-"bered Sion;" when they remembered what she had been, and considered what she then was. Desolate and forsaken, she now sits upon the ground, who was once exalted above the nations; she calls to the whole world, to every people in every age, "See if ever there was sorrow like my sorrow [1]," and learn wisdom by my fall.

Yet, even here, God left not himself without witness, nor his people without honour, in the land of the enemy. The irresistible monarch, almost ready to propose himself as an object of worship, is seen prostrate at the feet of a captive Jew. Daniel is exalted to power, and a prophet rules in the province of Babylon; while the abasement of that proud prince, by the judgement of God, even to the condition of the beasts of the field, seemed to prognos-

[1] Lam. i. 12.

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ticate the approaching downfall of the empire, which came to pass in the days of his grandson.

For now, Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, having performed her appointed task, was to be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah. The staff wherewith the Lord had smitten so many nations, the hammer which had broken the whole earth to pieces, was to be, itself, cut asunder and broken, while the sceptre of the world passed to the second great monarchy, that of the Medes and Persians.

To this end, a prince appears, with a disposition calculated to conciliate the affections of different nations ranged under his banners. That disposition is improved by a discipline which has been the admiration of every succeeding age. He is instructed in the best maxims of political wisdom, and his undertakings prosper in his hands. He takes Babylon, and puts a period to the Chaldean empire. Profane history relates this transaction at large; but the designs of Providence accomplished by it, are unfolded in the Scriptures, where God is represented as saying of Cyrus, by name, two hundred years before he was born, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, "Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy "foundations shall be laid. I have raised him up "in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. "He shall build my city, and he shall let go my "captives, not for price nor reward, saith the "Lord of hosts. For Jacob my servant's sake, and "for Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by

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"name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast "not known me[m]." When Cyrus took possession of Babylon, Daniel was there, and is said to have prospered not only "in the reign of Darius," but also in that of "Cyrus the Persian." It is hardly possible, therefore, to conceive, that these prophecies of Isaiah should not be shown by him to the new monarch. And, indeed, the proclamation published by Cyrus in the very first year of his reign is worded in a manner, which demonstrates that this had been done. It is thus recorded at the conclusion of the second book of Chronicles—"Now in "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, he made a "proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put "it in writing, saying—Thus saith Cyrus, king of "Persia—All the kingdoms of the earth hath the "Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath "charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, "which is in Judah. Who is there among you of "all his people? The Lord his God be with him, "and let him go up."

Restored by this edict, the Jewish state grew up again to maturity, under the protection of the Persian empire, and at length arose superior to the envy and jealousy of its neighbours. Under the tyrant Ochus, it suffered some severities from the same empire, which gave way, in its turn, to the third monarchy, erected on its ruins by the king of Græcia[n], or Alexander the Great. The anger of this

[m] Isaiah, xliv. 28. xlv. 4. 13.
[n] Daniel, viii. 21.

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prince against Jerusalem, occasioned by a refusal of his demands, on a sudden, at the sight of the high priest coming forth in procession to meet him, was converted into a reverence for the temple, and an admiration of the prophecies of Daniel, uttered so long before concerning him, which were shown to him, as those of Isaiah, in a former instance, had been shown to Cyrus. In them seeing himself and the rapidity of his conquests already described, he led his forces against the Persians, as to certain victory[o]; and having performed the work whereunto he had been appointed, was thrown aside as a withered rod, dying at Babylon, in the thirty-third year of his age.

During the reign of Ptolemy Lagos, one of the successors of Alexander, the Jews were carried away in great numbers into Egypt, by which means the knowledge of the God of Israel was diffused among the nations, preparatory to their future conversion by the Gospel. The cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes, another of those successors, served only to manifest the power of that God, and to call forth the glories of the Asmonean family, under which the kingdom of Judah was enlarged by new accessions, and enjoyed a long succession of halcyon days, very beautifully and affectingly described in the writings of the prophets.

In the time of this family, as we learn from the book of Maccabees, the first league was made with the Roman power, which was then gradually rising

[o] Josephus, Antiq. Jud. lib. xi. ad fin.

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into the fourth great empire of the world, and protected the Jews for some time against their adversaries, the kings of Syria.

But when this once highly favoured people had forsaken the word of their God, going astray after their own traditions; when they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, by the crucifixion of the Son of God and the persecution of his apostles; the Spirit of life passed from the law to the Gospel, and left their whole system a breathless carcass. Directed by Heaven, the Roman eagles flew to the prey [p], and Jerusalem suffered in a manner which astonished the soul of Titus himself, and which, from that day to this, hath made the ears of every one who hath heard it to tingle.

The Roman empire, by uniting all nations under its government, prepared the way for the universality of the true religion, which, receiving strength from every fresh persecution, at length conquered the conquerors of the world; and the cross became the ornament and glory of the imperial diadem. But a love of the old idolatry, and a zeal for the gods of Romulus, still possessed that great and powerful body of men, the senate, who continually importuned the Christian emperors to restore the ancient worship, and were only restrained by them from renewing the persecution, after the example of their ancestors [q]. This was the state of things in the

[p] Luke, xvii. 37.

[q] See Bossuet's Universal History, ii. 184; and the authorities there referred to.

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fourth century, when God, calling to remembrance the repeated cruelties of the oppressor, and the unexampled sufferings of his faithful people, delivered up to the Barbarians that city, drunken with the blood of the martyrs. "New nations," says an elegant historian, "seemed to arise, and to rush "upon unknown regions, in order to take vengeance "on the Romans, for the calamities which they had "inflicted on mankind[r]." The unwieldy fabric of the empire shared the fate of its predecessors; it was overthrown with a mighty desolation, and divided into the kingdoms which now subsist around us, the invaders, by change of situation, becoming humanized, and having been converted to the faith of Christ.

Among these western kingdoms, in the bosom of the church, and in the pretended name of Christ, hath arisen a tyrannical and oppressive power, exercising dominion over the undertakings and consciences of men, and arming itself with fire and sword for the punishment of all who presume to call in question the infallibility of its decisions. About the same period were laid the foundations of another power, destined to be the scourge of God to the corrupt and degenerate Christians of the eastern part of the Roman empire; the Pharaoh, the Nebuchadnezzar, and the Antiochus of latter times. These have their stated task to perform, after which, they likewise, according to the prophecies, recorded in the Scriptures (to the interpretation of which learned

[r] Robertson's History of Charles V. vol. i. sect. 1.

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men are very commendably turning our attention, with increasing probability of success as the events predicted approach), they likewise will go into perdition. "The Lord will consume them by the spirit "of his mouth, and destroy them by the brightness "of his coming." Then the happy day, foretold by the prophets, shall arrive, when all earthly rule and authority and power shall be put down, and "the "kingdoms of this world shall become," in the most exalted sense of the words, "the kingdoms of our "Lord and his Christ."

Thus, by going into the sanctuary of God, we see the end of all human glory. There taking our stand, we behold the empires of the world passing swiftly by us, and vanishing away, to give place to that kingdom which shall endure for ever; while the Almighty, by suffering them to continue no longer than they served his designs, affords us sufficient ground to apply to all, his own declaration concerning one of them: "For this cause have I raised thee "up, to show in thee my power, and that my name "may be declared through all the earth[a]." The fate of empires being interwoven with that of religion, it pleased God to communicate to his servants the prophets, the secrets of his administration with regard to *them;* and the view which we have now taken of it, demonstrates that they are so many instruments in the hand of Providence, to execute its designs of mercy or judgement on those who successively become the objects of either, accord-

[a] Exod. ix. 16.

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ing to the uniform tenour of the divine œconomy, from the beginning to the end of time.

From a survey of God's proceedings, learn we to rectify and regulate our own. To punish wickedness and vice, to preserve and promote true religion and virtue, appears to have been the end and design of all his dispensations. Let it be the end and design of all our transactions, upon the present, and upon every other occasion. The series of events which has been exhibited points out the difference between that which is of the earth, earthy, and that which cometh from above; and directs us where to fix our choice. Not princes only, but empires, you see, are mortal. *They* sink, to rise no more. The Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman,—where are they? They are gone—they sleep among the dead. And, what they are, the states now subsisting around us, which have so often disturbed the repose of Christendom, and, with their numerous and well-appointed armies, threaten again to disturb it, shall one day be. All below is inconstancy and agitation. But the kingdom of God shall stand. Its foundations were laid before those of the world; and when that shall be in ashes, when the powers of the earth and the lights of heaven shall fall, and be extinguished for ever, its superstructure will appear in perfect beauty. Death dissolves the relation we bear to an earthly government, and all civil distinctions drop into the dust together. But our citizenship, as saith the apostle,—ἡμῶν πολίτευμα,—is in heaven[t]. As

[t] Philip. iii. 20.

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Christians, we belong to a polity not subject to dissolution; a society, whose duration runs parallel with the days of eternity. We form a body of which Messiah is the head, and to which angels are therefore enjoined to minister. What wonder is it, that we find exceeding great and precious promises made to this high and heavenly community, and fulfilled, with regard to the empires of the world, from age to age? "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and "queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down "to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick "up the dust of thy feet[u]. The sons also of them "that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, "and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet, and they "shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of "the Holy One of Israel. Therefore thy gates shall "be open continually; they shall not be shut day "nor night; that men may bring unto thee the "forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may "be brought; for the nation and kingdom that will "not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall "be utterly wasted[w]."

Thus "glorious are the things spoken of thee, "thou city of God[x]!" May we not, therefore, take up our parable, with Balaam, and say, "Surely "there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is "there any divination against Israel[y]! How shall "we curse whom God hath not cursed? or how

[u] Isa. xlix. 23.
[w] Isa. lx. 14, &c. 11, 12.
[x] Psal. lxxxvii. 3.
[y] Numb. xxiij. 23.

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"shall we defy whom God hath not defied[z]? Be-
"hold, we have received commandment to bless:
"He hath blessed, and we cannot reverse it[a]." If the dealings of the Almighty with a people be squared by their dealings with his religion, the state of religion will always be the surest criterion whereby to judge of the state of that nation wherein it is planted; that there can be no greater enemies to their country, than those who are enemies to her; since concerning her He hath declared, who cannot deceive, or be deceived—"No weapon that is formed
"against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that
"shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt con-
"demn[b]."

God doth not every day manifest his will, by his prophets, respecting the kingdoms which he setteth up and putteth down. But having so often done it in the cases of those great empires of which we have been speaking, he showeth us, by such remarkable and prominent instances, how he acts in all others, and thereby enables us to form a competent idea of our own situation and circumstances. Sacred history informs us what was the particular state of the ancient people of God, when he punished them by the Heathen nations; and both sacred and profane history informs us what was the state of each empire, when subverted by another. Similar causes produce similar effects. For though God's counsels are always executed, yet they are executed, for the most part, in that way which we are wont to call the

[z] Numb. xxiii. 8. [a] Numb. xxiii. 20. [b] Isai. liv. 17.

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natural course of things. He who has ordained that all parts of the universe should have a mutual dependence on each other, and operate regularly, by a due concatenation of causes and effects, has likewise ordained that the course of human affairs should have its progression and proportion. Individuals and communities arise, accordingly, at proper times, with qualities suited to the station they are destined to fill, and the work which they are intended to perform. It is, therefore, no less useful than curious, in reading history, to mark the different dispositions, manners, and characters of nations, and their rulers; since these are the instruments, working under the direction of Providence, for the accomplishment of its designs, without any infringement of man's free will. If you behold a nation distinguished by irreligion and contempt of things sacred, by licentiousness, faction, luxury, dissipation, and effeminacy, be assured that, without a reformation, and a return to first principles, the conquest of that nation by some other is becoming more and more feasible every day; the same vices which provoke divine vengeance, preparing the way for its execution. Such were the characteristics of the ancient people of God in the times preceding their several captivities. Such was the case when the old Assyrian empire perished with Sardanapalus; when Babylon was surprised by Cyrus; when Darius was overthrown by Alexander; when Greece fell under the dominion of the Romans; when these last were overwhelmed by the northern nations; and when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Every man, who has the

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prosperity of his country at heart, should very seriously consider, how far these *tokens* are to be found upon ourselves; what can be done to prevent the farther spreading of the infection, and to eradicate the seeds of the disorder. Those in the higher ranks of life, it may be said—it ought to be said—cannot complain, that a bright example of virtue is not held forth to them from the throne. Happy would it be for themselves, happy for the community, would they study to reflect its lustre on the wide-extended circles of their inferiors and dependants. The legislature hath by no means shown itself backward in supporting that establishment of Christianity settled among us at the reformation. The integrity of those truly reverend and respectable persons, intrusted with the important charge of administering justice and judgement in the land—that particular, which rendered the Romans, in the opinion even of their enemies, worthy to be masters of the world—is universally seen, and gratefully acknowledged. In these sequestered and peaceful scenes, the destined mansions of literature and religion (long may they continue to be so, loved by the good, and patronised by the great!) though the fences of our enclosure will not serve entirely to exclude the turn and temper of the world about us, yet many are diligent to teach, and many attentive to learn. Wisdom uttereth her voice, and the sound of the Gospel is heard. There is a river, the streams whereof, going forth from this their fountain, often cause the wilderness to become a fruitful field; to rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It must be added,

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that there certainly resides in British bosoms a laudable propensity to acts of beneficence. I have no desire to present the dark side of the prospect. May the whole become light! May the returning spirit and power of godliness reanimate its form, and be again the heart and soul of every action and intention, producing, with piety and charity unfeigned, obedience, union, honesty, frugality, temperance, purity; let me add, health, strength, and true fortitude. With these, should we, at any future time, be called to go forth against our old enemies (all our present unhappy differences adjusted, and all our divisions healed), we shall go forth under the favour and protection of Heaven; and then, He who created the world, and who preserves it for the sake of his church; He who secured her in the ark, when the flood came, and watched over her in the families of the holy patriarchs; He who brought her out of Egypt, led her through the wilderness, introduced her into the promised inheritance, and made her to be the glory of the whole earth; He who raised up Cyrus to deliver her from the power of Babylon; who turned the heart of Alexander in her favour; who went out, with Judas and his brethren, to the battle against the armies of Antiochus, and bade the sword of Constantine conquer under the banner of the cross; He, the Lord of Hosts, will ever be with us; He, the God of Jacob, will ever be our refuge!—"O that my people"—says he, in that most condescending and affectionate wish—"O that my people had hearkened unto me, and

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"Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have "subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against "their adversaries[c]—THEM THAT HONOUR ME I "WILL HONOUR; BUT SUCH AS DESPISE ME "SHALL BE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED."

[c] Psal. lxxxi. 13, 14.

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DISCOURSE XXXIV.

CHRIST THE OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS ADORATION, AND THEREFORE VERY GOD.

ROMANS, x. 13.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

THE text, as Dr. Whitby well remarks upon it, presents us with a double argument in favour of our Lord's Divinity. First, it applies to HIM, what by the prophet Joel is spoken of Jehovah; Secondly, it affirms him to be the object of religious adoration. Either of these particulars does, indeed, imply the other. For if he be Jehovah, he must be the object of religious adoration; and, if the object of religious adoration, he must be Jehovah. We might therefore take occasion, from this passage, to prove his Divinity, and from thence infer, that he is to be worshipped; but at present, that the subject may be viewed on every side, let us take it in another light; let us first prove, that he is to be worshipped, and from thence infer his Divinity.

But it is incumbent upon me previously to observe, that, since the composition of the following discourse, the cause has been pleaded at large by much abler

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advocates*; for which reason, a resolution was once taken to lay it aside, as fully and happily superseded. But a saying of one of the ancients occurred, that in times when erroneous and noxious tenets were diffused, all men should embrace some opportunity to bear their testimony against them. It occurred likewise, that the evidence, drawn to a point, and delivered from the pulpit, might strike many (of my younger auditors more especially) who might not be disposed to search for it in tracts of greater extent, and far greater merit. This consideration, above all, prevailed, that the established doctrine concerning the worship of our Redeemer might receive no small degree of confirmation in the minds of its professors, when, without concert or consultation, persons sitting down to reconsider it, at different times and in different places, should be found to represent it in the same light, and to vindicate it by the same arguments. Entreating your favourable acceptance of this very necessary apology, I will venture to proceed.

Invocation, then, is a part, and a principal part, of adoration; but my text mentions the invocation of Christ, as a duty, to the performance of which salvation is annexed: "Whosoever shall call upon "the name of the Lord shall be saved." The context treats wholly of Christ, in whom, it is said,

* See Dr. Randolph's Vindication of the Worship of the Son and Holy Ghost; and Mr. Bingham's Vindication of the Doctrine and Liturgy of the Church of England. See likewise Mr. Burgh's Scriptural Confutation of the Arguments against the one Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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"Whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed;" and in whom, it is likewise said, the Jews refused to believe, when they had heard of him by the preaching of the apostles. "Whosoever shall call on the name "of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they "call on him, of whom they have not heard? and "how shall they hear without a preacher?" &c. Christ therefore is, without doubt, the person mentioned in the text; he is, consequently, the object of invocation, a principal part of religious adoration; and the man who desires to be "saved," must "call "upon him," by prayer.

In the apostolical times, all Christians were supposed, by virtue of their profession, to invoke Christ, and were characterized by that very circumstance. Thus St. Paul addresses one of his epistles, to "all "that in every place call upon the name of the "Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours[b];" that is, says an excellent paraphrast[c], "whom we and all true "Christians join in acknowledging and adoring as "their Lord and ours." In the ninth chapter of the Acts, we find Ananias saying of Saul, "And here "he hath authority to bind all that call on thy name;" that is, says Dr. Hammond, "who publicly avow "the worship of Christ." Again, in the same chapter, we read, "And straightway he preached Christ "in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. "But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is "not this he that destroyed them who called on this "name?" that is, evidently, the name of Christ.

[b] 1 Cor. i. 2. [c] Dr. Doddridge.

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Some critics tell us, that the phrase επικαλουμενοι το Ονομα Χριστου, "calling upon the name of Christ," is to be taken passively, as denoting those who were named by the name of Christ, or who were called Christians. But this cannot be. The name, Christian, was not known in the world, till some time after St. Paul's conversion, when, as St. Luke expressly informs us, "the disciples were called Christians first "at Antioch;" whereas, before that time, they were distinguished by the title of επικαλουμενοι το Ονομα Χριστου, "those who called on the name of Christ." Besides that επικαλεομαι (as hath been justly observed), when followed by an accusative case, always signifies to invoke, or worship, except only where it signifies to appeal to. Thus, in the chapter from whence my text is taken—"The same Lord is rich to all who "call upon him—for whosoever shall call on the "name of the Lord shall be saved[d]." In the twenty-second chapter of the Acts, Saul is bidden to "wash "away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord[e]." And Origen, who must have understood the import and force of a Greek participle, at least as well as any modern critic, commenting on one of the above cited passages, says—"The apostle, in these words, "declares him to be God, whose name was called "upon[f]." The argument, therefore, deduced from

[d] εις παντας τους επικαλουμενους αυτον—πας γαρ ος αν επικαλεσηται το Ονομα Κυριου σωθησεται.

[e] Επικαλεσαμενος το Ονομα του Κυριου.

[f] Origen. Com. in Rom. x. lib. viii.

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this expression, we may venture to say stands good; nor can it admit of any farther reply or evasion.

St. Paul's usual form of benediction was by invocation of the name of Christ. "Grace be to you, "and peace, from God the Father, and from our "Lord Jesus Christ." Sometimes the name of Christ stands in the first order; "The grace of the Lord Jesus "Christ, and the love of God, and the communion "of the Holy Ghost be with you all[g]." In another place, "The Lord Jesus Christ comfort your hearts[h];" "that is, I pray the Lord Jesus Christ so to do. And speaking of his thorn in the flesh, he says, "I besought "the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for "thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my in-"firmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon "me[i];"—The power of Christ,—that is, plainly, of the Lord whom he besought, and who said, "My "strength is made perfect in weakness."—I would entreat your attention to the following passage in 1 John, v. 13. &c. "These things have I written unto "you—that ye may believe on the name of the Son "of God. And this is the confidence we have in "him, that if we ask any thing according to his "will, he heareth us. And if we know that he "hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we "have the petitions we desired of him." In another part of the epistle, the same precept is repeated,

[g] 2 Cor. xiii. 14. [h] 2 Thess. ii. 16. [i] 2 Cor. xii. 8.

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but the word God is used, instead of the word Christ—"We have confidence toward God, and "whatsoever we ask, we receive of him[k]." Can a man read these two passages, and doubt for a single moment, whether his Saviour be the God that hareth prayer?

The blessed martyr Stephen, just before he expired, preferred the following prayer to his Saviour, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Can a departing soul be thus solemnly committed into the hands of any one, but of him, who is "the God of the spi-"rits of all flesh?" Does not St. Stephen here worship Christ, in the very same manner in which, a little before, Christ himself had worshipped the Father? Where is the difference between, "Father, "into thy hands I commend my spirit"—and—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit?" Does not the martyr likewise address Christ, as the person who could forgive sins? Where is the difference, again, between—"Father, forgive them, for they know "not what they do"—and—"Lord, lay not this sin "to their charge?" Or shall a dying Christian scruple to say what St. Stephen said, because Christ does not appear to the one, as he was pleased to do to the other? It is a cavil not fit to proceed from the mouth of a serious man.

We read of many persons, who, when Christ was upon earth, falling down upon their faces, and worshipping him, were never checked or reproved

[k] 1 John, iii. 21, 22.

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for so doing, as St. John was when he offered to worship the angel; and Cornelius, when he made the same offer to St. Peter.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, evincing the superiority of the Son of God over all created spirits, produces the following testimony: "When "he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he "saith, And let all the angels of God worship "him[l]." If you ask what kind of worship the apostle may be supposed to intend, let us turn to the Revelation. There, upon the exaltation of our Lord, after his sufferings, St. John represents to us the church universally in heaven and earth, with the parts of created nature, and all the angelic intelligences, ascribing the very same "blessing, and "honour, and glory, and power, to him that sitteth "on the throne, and to the Lamb," in conjunction[m]. In heaven, the will of God is duly performed, and all "honour the Son, even as they honour the "Father[n]." Why should it be otherwise on earth?

That it ought not to be otherwise, but that equal honour should be paid to both Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, is evidently implied by the baptismal form running in the name of all the Three. If the Holy Spirit were a property only, as the Socinians pretend, could a property be thus joined with the Father and the Son? *They* are not properties; they are persons, certainly. If the Son and the Spirit were creatures, could they be joined with the Father in the solemn act of baptism? Baptism is

[l] Heb. i. 6. [m] Rev. v. 13. [n] John, v. 23.

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the consecration of him who is baptized, to the service—of whom? Of God, and two creatures? No, surely, but of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and, whether St. John hath said it or not, if there be any meaning in words, THESE THREE ARE ONE, they are the one object of our faith and our love, of our prayers and our praises. While this form continues to be used in the Church, the doctrine of the TRINITY cannot perish from it; and who denies glory and worship to be due to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, does, in effect, renounce his baptism, and ought to be initiated, by a new form, into a new religion.

Thus stands the Scripture evidence: and we find the practice of the primitive Christians entirely conformable to it. A remarkable instance offers itself, very early, in the case of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. He suffered in the year 167. He joins God the Father and the Son together in his prayers for grace and benediction upon men, conceived in the following manly and exalted strain of piety and charity—"The God and "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ himself "the eternal High Priest, the Son of God, build you "up in faith, and truth, and in all meekness, to live "without anger, in patience, in long-suffering, "and forbearance, and give you a lot and part "among the saints, and to us with you, and to all "them that are under heaven, who shall believe in "Jesus Christ our Lord, and in his Father, who "raised him from the dead*." And when he was

* Polycarp. Epist. ad Philipp. sect. xii.

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brought to the stake, he concluded his last prayer with this doxology to the whole Trinity—"I bless "thee, I praise thee, I glorify thee for all things, "together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, "thy beloved Son, with whom, unto thee, and the "Holy Spirit, be glory, both now and for ever, "world without end[p]:" So prayed this holy bishop and blessed martyr of Christ, at the hour of his departure out of the world. As he had been a disciple of St. John the evangelist, we cannot well suppose him ignorant of the proper object of Christian worship. We find him in possession of the doctrine of a coequal and coeternal Trinity, considered as that object; a doctrine which, we may venture to say, he did not derive from the Platonists of Alexandria, from scholastic theology, or from the papal chair. And we may continue, it is hoped, to use the prayers in our own liturgy, though they conclude exactly like the prayer of Polycarp.

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, suffered for the faith, fifty years before Polycarp, and had conversed familiarly with many of the apostles. He begins one of his epistles in the following manner:—"I "glorify Jesus Christ our God, who hath given un-"to you this wisdom[q]." Could such men as these, instructed by the apostles themselves, be mistaken in the capital article of all religion, the object of

[p] Martyr. Policarp. apud Coteler. Patres Apostol. t. ii. p. 199.

[q] Δοξαζω Ιησουν Χριστον τον Θεον, τον ουτως υμας σοφισαντα. Ignat. Epist. ad Smyrn.

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divine worship? Impossible! A man must have the credulity of an infidel to believe it.

Justin Martyr, who flourished about the middle of the second century declares to the Pagans, that the object of Christian worship was the whole Trinity. "We worship and adore," says he, "the God of righ-"teousness, and his Son, and the Holy Spirit of pro-"phecy." Yet, a little after, he tells the emperors, "We hold it unlawful to worship any but God "alone".[r] So Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century,—"We worship and adore no "creature but the Father, the Son, and the Holy "Ghost".[s] Give me leave to insist a little on an argument suggested by these passages, because it seems for ever to determine the question concerning the faith of the primitive church on the article of our Lord's true and proper Divinity. The Christians objected to the Pagans their idolatry. The Pagans retorted the objection on the Christians, as the worshippers of a crucified man. Here, you see, was a stroke aimed at the very heart of the new religion. And now, how do the Christians defend themselves? Had the charge, like many others, been false, they would certainly have denied it at once. It behoved them so to have done; for the contest was *pro aris et focis;* for every thing near and dear. They could never have continued to reproach their adversaries with a crime of which they were notoriously guilty themselves. But they do not deny the

[r] Justin. Apol. ii.
[s] Comment. in Epist. ad Rom. lib. i.

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fact. They acknowledge it universally; and yet, at the same time, affirm, "We worship God alone[t]." In their practice, then, they showed their belief of Christ's true Divinity. They worshipped him only upon this ground, that he was one God with the Father; and to have done it on any other supposition, had been idolatry, by their own confession. What are we, therefore, to think of our modern unitarians, who repeatedly, and as it should seem, seriously tell us, that all the fathers of the first three centuries were of their opinion[u]? To say this, is to make them guilty of the grossest idolatry, and to involve them in a monstrous contradiction: they laid it down as a first principle, that God alone was to be worshipped; and, all the while, gave divine honour to one, whom (if these moderns say true) they did not hold to be God by nature, but a creature only.

Let any person, with attention and impartiality, survey this argument again and again on every side; and it will appear to be absolutely unanswerable. The earliest Christians professed to worship God alone; but they constantly and uniformly professed to worship Christ; therefore they deemed Christ to be very God. The same is to be said with regard to the Holy Spirit. No matter how the Son was begotten of the Father, or how the Spirit proceeds from both. The mode we have nothing to do with; it is above and beyond us; it cannot be the subject

[t] Θεον μεν μονον προσκυνουμεν.

[u] "*All* Christian people, for upwards of 300 years after "Christ, till the council of Nice, were *generally* Unitarians." Mr. Lindsey's Apology, p. 24.

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of our reasonings. We are not now entangled in the thorny parts of the subject; we are not disputing about mathematical niceties and distinctions. A plain matter of fact is before us. The premises are fixed by ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the primitive apologists, firm as the everlasting hills; no other conclusion can be drawn from them by the art of man; and the argument is obvious to the common sense of the whole world.

During the persecutions under the Heathen emperors, the martyrs, who suffered in them, commonly directed their prayers, as St. Stephen did, personally to Christ, in whose cause they laid down their lives, and into whose hands they resigned their spirits, commending their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator and Redeemer. In the Dioclesian persecution, as Eusebius informs us, the inhabitants of a city in Phrygia, men, women, and children, while assembled in the church at their devotions, were by their enemies surprised and burnt, "calling "upon Christ, God over all[w]." Many other instances occur in the same historian, where the dying martyrs address their prayers to Christ, under the highest titles and attributes of the Divinity, as the living and true God, the great King over all the earth, omniscient and almighty, the Son of God, and himself true and very God. And, as such, Eusebius says, the highest powers on earth confessed and adored him[x].

[w] Τον επι παντων Θεον Χριστον επιζωμενοι.

[x] Euseb. lib. x. cap. iv. See the passages cited by Bingham, in Eccles. Antiq. b. xiii. ch. ii.

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Would you hear the contemporary writers, among the Heathens, bearing testimony to the same great and important truth, concerning the object of worship in the earliest days of the Christian church? You shall hear them.

Pliny lived in the beginning of the second century, and, as a judge under Trajan, took the confessions of some revolting Christians. He says, they declared to him, "their custom was, to meet on a "certain day, before it was light, and, among other "parts of their worship, sing an hymn to Christ, as "to their God[y]."

Towards the close of the same century, Lucian, or whoever was the author of the dialogue styled Philopatris, bearing his name, and certainly written about that time, introduces, in a scoffing way, a Christian catechist instructing a Pagan catechumen. The latter asks, "By whom, then, shall I swear?" that is, whom shall I take to be my God, the object of my worship? The answer is, "By that God "that reigns on high, the great immortal, heavenly "God, and the Son of the Father, and the Spirit "proceeding from the Father, One in Three, and "Three in One. Take these for your Jupiter; ima-"gine this to be your God[z]." Lucian, then, had evidently learned, and it was well known among the Heathens in his time, that the Father, the Son, and

[y] Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem. Plin. lib. x. Ep. 97.

[z] Lucian. Philopatris, prope fin.

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the Holy Ghost, or a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, constituted the object of Christian worship. The manner in which this testimony affected Socinus well deserves your notice—"I never met "with any thing which seems more to favour the "notion, that a Trinity of persons in the God-"head was in that age the object of belief and "worship, than this passage from the dialogue "styled Philopatris[a]." It might, perhaps, be some advantage to it in his esteem, as Dr. Waterland observes[b], that it came from a Pagan, though it had not weight enough to conquer his prejudices; for he never wanted evasions. But you see in how very forcible a manner it struck his apprehension.

Such was the practice of the Christian church, respecting the worship of its Saviour, from the very beginning, and during the first three ages; long before Arianism appeared in the world, or any of those difficult questions were raised, which afterwards perplexed men with unintelligible subtleties, occasioned by the restless endeavours and sophistry of the Arian party.

What shall we, then, say to these things? What can we say? but that He, to the invocation of whose

[a] Nec vero nobis quidquam hactenus legere contigit, quod trini istius Dei, a Christianis jam tum recepti et culti, fidem facere videatur magis, quam quæ ex dialogo, qui Philopatris inscribitur, et inter Luciani opera numeratur, ad id probandum affertur. Socin. adv. Eutrop. c. xv. p. 689. Op.

[b] Importance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, p. 370.

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name salvation is promised; He, whose name his disciples, before they were called Christians, invoked, and were known to be his disciples by so doing; He, in whose name the apostles were accustomed to give their benedictions, and concerning whom St. John says, that, "whatever we ask of him according to "his will, we shall have the petitions we desired "of him;" He, who was worshipped by men, without reproving them for it, on earth, and to whom, in heaven, all the angelic hosts, with the spirits of the redeemed, and the whole creation of God, give glory and honour; He, whom the church universal professed, from the beginning, to adore; and into whose hands the dying martyrs, from Stephen downward, committed their departing spirits; He, to whose service and worship, with that of the Father and the Holy Ghost, every Christian is dedicated, in baptism; that this Person is, indeed, what St. Paul certainly styles him, "God over all, blessed for ever[c];" and that we all may, and ought to use the words of St. Thomas, uttered not, as is pretended, by way of exclamation to the Father, but in an immediate address to the Son—("Then Thomas answered, "and said *unto him*)—My Lord, and my God[d]."

For consider well with yourselves—if we are to worship only the Lord our God, as the primitive Christians professed to do; and if we are, yet, to worship Christ, as they also professed to do; must it not of necessity follow, that Christ is the Lord our God?

[c] Rom. ix. 5.

[d] John, xx. 28.

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If millions of his servants, from all the different parts of the world, are to invoke him by prayer, and he hears the prayer of the heart, as well as that of the lips, must he not be omniscient and omnipresent to do this? The argument has often been urged with success against saint-worship. It holds equally strong against creature-worship.

If St. Paul blamed the Heathen, because they gave divine worship to those who were not gods by nature[e], shall we be blameless, when we worship Christ, unless he be by nature God[f]?

If divine worship be due to Christ, must he not be possessed of that divine dignity and excellence, which are the proper foundation of it? And can these be communicated to a creature? Between the creature and its Creator, and the honour due respectively to each, must not the difference be ever infinite? Socinus, who held Christ to be a mere man, and yet held divine worship to be due to him, was confounded and silenced by this very argument, in a conference with one of his disciples[g], who carried its principle to its proper conclusion, and denied Christ to be at all the object of divine worship.

But do not the Scriptures affirm, that Christ is to be worshipped in consequence of his sufferings, and exaltation, and the power with which he was then invested? Undoubtedly. And do not the same

[e] Μη φυσει ουσι θεοις. [f] Φυσει Θεος.

[g] Frankenius. See an abstract of the dispute, in Bishop Bull's Primitiva et Apostolica Traditio de Jesu Christi Divinitate, cap. vi. p. 393.

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Scriptures inform us, that God was worshipped in consequence of his having created the world, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? He was then worshipped in the new relation of Creator, as Christ was worshipped upon his ascension, in the new relation of Redeemer. But God was worshipped before the world was created, and will be worshipped after its dissolution. The Son of God was worshipped before he entered upon the work of redemption. He had glory with the Father before the foundation of the world[h]; he existed "in the form of God," before he existed in the "likeness of man;" that is, he was God before he was man: and, as God, he will be worshipped to eternity, when his mediatorial kingdom, as Messiah, shall be at an end.

The worshippers of Christ are charged with idolatry. If he be a mere man, or, indeed, if he be a creature, there is foundation for the charge. But if, at his birth, "God" was "manifest in the flesh[i]," of what crime are they guilty, who deny him the honour due to him, and turn his humiliation, on their account, into an argument against his Divinity? And let it be observed, that if we are guilty of idolatry, the whole church of Christ has been guilty of it, in the grossest manner, from the days of the apostles to the present hour.

It hath been asserted, that the worship of Christ is inconsistent with his office of Mediator. But

[h] John, xvii. 5. [i] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

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why? It seems rather to be implied, than excluded; since a Mediator must communicate with both parties; and our method of communicating with Christ must be by praying to him. Is there any contradiction, or incongruity, in the conduct of our devotions, if we sometimes beseech the Father to pardon and bless us, for the sake of his dear Son: and, at other times, entreat the Son to bestow upon us those mercies which the Father has granted for his sake? The same is to be said of the Spirit and his comforts, given by the Father through the Son. In one word; if the divine Persons, in the œconomy of man's redemption, have graciously condescended to assume these offices, and to act in these characters, shall we therefore say, they are not divine? This consideration alone seems to afford a general and satisfactory answer to all the objections founded on those texts, which intimate disparity and inferiority; which speak of sending, and being sent, and the like.—How mournful is the reflection, that this very consideration, which ought to fill our hearts with wonder, love, and praise, should be made occasion of denying the Lord that bought us, and the Spirit that consecrates us to glory and immortality!—Lord, what is man! behold, with compassion, his miserable depravity; and open his eyes, that he may behold it himself!

But you, my brethren (I address myself to the younger part of my audience), have not so learned Christ. You know in whom you have believed; and you know the importance of believing Him to be, what He really is. The question we have been dis-

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cussing is not of a trifling or indifferent nature. It relates to the prime and leading articles of all religion. It is not a point of speculation merely: our daily practice is concerned in its determination; according to which, we are led either to honour or to dishonour our Redeemer. Minds honest and ingenuous, like yours, will find no difficulty in forming a right judgement upon the subject. In order to do it, there is no necessity for you to plunge into all the metaphysical depths of the controversy. The dispute lies in a small compass. It turns upon a fact, whether Christ was, or was not, the object of divine worship, in the apostolical times and those immediately succeeding. The evidence has been clearly, I would hope, though briefly, stated to you, in the preceding discourse. But I would wish you to search, and collect it more at large for yourselves; those of you, especially, who are preparing to teach others the truth, and to guard them against the various errors which mark these latter days. The Scriptural part of the evidence lies in a little compass. The remainder may be found in the epistles of the apostolical fathers, the apologies of Justin Martyr, and one or two more, and the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius. Should I say, that all these might be read, with ease, in two months, I should say no more than the truth. And so much, at least, of primitive antiquity ought to be studied by every divine; indeed, by every Christian, who has leisure and ability. For why should any man continue ignorant of that which is so soon, and so easily

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known? Be conversant in the Scriptures, and acquaint yourselves well with the doctrine and the practice of the church in its earliest and purest days, when you first enter upon the ministry; and the efforts of unhappily misguided men will in vain be afterwards exerted to move you from the rock of your salvation. Remember Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and consider how great things he hath done for you; things which, had they been left for a creature to effect, had been uneffected at this hour; they must have ceased, to eternity; "none of "them can by any means redeem his brother, or "give to God a ransom for him." To withhold prayer from your Saviour, is impious perverseness; to withhold praise and thanksgiving, is impious ingratitude. Heaven resounds with Salvation to the Lamb triumphant; and shall earth be sullenly silent? Christ rejoiced in his afflictions, and esteemed them glory, for your sake. No temptation could prevail upon the Lord, in the hour of suffering and sorrow, to relinquish his gracious purpose, and desert the cause of his disciples; let no temptation prevail upon them to desert and disown the cause of their Lord. Would any man persuade you to refuse divine worship to your Redeemer? reject the attempt (whoever makes it) with a noble scorn; and whatever others may think, or however they may act, upon the occasion, do you call to mind the generous confession uttered by the martyr Polycarp, when the Roman proconsul had urged him to deny Christ.—"Fourscore and six years

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"(said the venerable old bishop) have I served "him, and never yet received any thing but good "at his hands: how, then, shall I now blaspheme "my King and my Saviour[k]?"

[k] Martyrium Polycarpi apud Cotelor. Patr. Apostol. t. ii. p. 198.

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DISCOURSE XXXV.

A FAST SERMON.

DEUT. XXIII. 9.

When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

As a minister of that Gospel which was first published by the Prince of Peace, who came to reconcile all things in heaven and earth, and bequeathed peace, as his last and best legacy, to his disciples, I could rather have wished it might have been my province to congrulate you this day on the approach of its re-establishment in the world; on the delightful prospect of times, when the whole earth should once more sit quiet, and be at leisure to attend to better things than ingenious and well concerted plans of mutual destruction; when "nation "should not lift up sword against nation, neither "should they learn war any more." These ought to be the effects of religion; these would be its effects were it universally understood and practised; these will be its effects at a more auspicious æra of the Christian church, and in a happier clime, as all the prophets have foretold which have been since the world began.

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Let none, meanwhile, be offended and stumble at that stumbling-stone laid in their way by the frequency of wars among nations professing Christianity. They owe not their origin to religion, but to the want of it. The fault is in the ground, not in the seed, which is good, but is either stolen away, or withered, or choked by the passions growing up with it, and sometimes, even making it the cause, the very innocent cause, of those dissensions and animosities, which it was designed for ever to extirpate. "Whence come wars and fightings among "you? Come they not hence, even of your desires," which your religion should mortify and subdue? Doubtless, the sight of Christian, Catholic, Faithful, and Apostolic princes, sending their numerous regiments to slaughter one another in the field of battle, forms a shocking contrast to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus—so shocking, that some have been thereby induced to maintain the utter unlawfulness of all war. But what, then, is to be done? Who can prevent a restless and ambitious state from attacking its neighbour. In these circumstances, such men must either defend themselves, or be defended by others, or God must interpose miraculously in their defence, or all must quietly submit to conquest and captivity by an unjust invader. Had this last been intended, that rigid moralist, the Baptist, would not have regulated, but prohibited the military profession; nor would Christians have served, as we know they did, with fidelity and diligence, in the armies of the Pagan emperors.

The lawfulness of a war must, therefore, be rested

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now, under the Gospel, upon the same foot on which it hath ever stood from the beginning, namely, the justice of it; and upon a supposition that our cause is good—as we humbly trust it is—we may undoubtedly accept the permission, or rather commission, implied in the first words of the text; "When the host goeth forth against thine enemies" —The people of God may still be brought under a necessity of engaging in war, defensive or offensive, to maintain their rights, or to avenge their wrongs; and that, whether against foreign enemies or rebellious subjects: much more, if the latter, after having erected the standard of independency, should unite with the former, and exclaim concerning those who nourished and brought them up, like the children of Lot, when Asur had acceded to the league— "Come, and let us root also them out, that they "may be no more a people; and that the name of "Israel may be no more in remembrance!" In circumstances like these, I say, when all is at stake, the people of God may carry on a war, as the only means left them to obtain an honourable and permanent peace, which, in many cases, can only be the fruit of victory; and heroes might again be celebrated by an apostle (should such heroes arise, with an apostle to celebrate them) who, through faith, have "subdued kingdoms," as well as "wrought righ- "eousness."

Between these two achievements, seemingly so very different (and often, alas! really so) the latter part of the text points out a nearer connexion, than might, perhaps, have been imagined ever to subsist.

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"When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, "then keep thee from every wicked thing." If, even with right on thy side, thou wouldst conquer and triumph, remember to prepare the way by repentance and reformation. If thou desirest to become great, let ambition first excite thee to be good. The qualities are associated in the style imperial of heaven —"the Lord of HOSTS—the HOLY One of Israel." The characters therefore of the Warrior and the Christian are not incompatible. The first convert to the Gospel from among the nations was a military man; Cornelius the centurion. That profession may unite with the clerical in the common cause; and the general may still go forth, as of old, with the prophet by his side. While the hands of Joshua are extended in the field, those of Moses may be elevated in prayer; and the ministers of religion may animate the people to overcome the adversary without them, by opposing and vanquishing, as a preliminary step, the enemy within them, the most dangerous enemy both to individuals and communities.

What God has thus joined together it is the error of the times to put asunder; to think only of our fleets and armies, and to forget our faith and practice. There are few to whom it occurs, that the latter can have any influence on the success of the former. Fleets and armies must undoubtedly go forth; they must have pay; they must have provision; they must have arms; they must have skilful leaders: but when all the arrangements are made, if God go not forth with them, vain is the help of

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man! "The horse is prepared"—he ought to be prepared—"against the day of battle; but salvation "is of the Lord." This idea, which never should be absent from our minds, and the correspondent affection which it is calculated to awaken in them, are expressed, in one of the prayers used upon these occasions, with a propriety, dignity, and pathos, which nothing can exceed—nothing can withstand. "O Lord God of our salvation, in whose hands are "the issues of life and death, of good and evil, and "without whose aid the wisest counsels of frail man, "and the multitude of an host, and all the instru-"ments of war, are but weak and vain; incline "thine ear, we pray thee, to the earnest and devout "supplications of thy servants; who, not confiding in "the splendour of any thing that is great, or the "stability of any thing that is strong here below, do "most humbly flee, O Lord, unto thee for succour, "and put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." These have been the sentiments of Britons, from age to age; and let them continue to be so, till time and the world shall finish their course together. In uttering them, we speak the words, not of superstition, bigotry, or enthusiasm, but of truth and soberness, if there be a God who governs the world; and if there be not, why do we fast and pray?—"Let "us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" we perish for ever, and become as if we had never been born. The doctrine of Epicurus is embraced for the sake of the inference drawn from it. But we have been better instructed; and therefore let the soldier, as well as the Christian, put on his armour with prayer

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and supplication. If, on the contrary, "when the "host goeth forth," it should carry prodigality, vice, and profaneness with it abroad, and they who send it forth should practise the same at home, what hope could remain? "Wouldest not thou, O our "God, be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed "us, so that there should be no remnant nor "escaping?"

For let us reflect, what an aggravation it must needs be of national wickedness in the sight of God, if it should be suffered to increase, or even to continue the same, at such a season as this.

War, in its own nature, is a species of justice, of corrective justice. It is intended to be such by those who enter into it, as deeming themselves to have been aggrieved, and finding no other method of obtaining redress. But—Thou that undertakest to correct offences in others, dost thou abandon thyself to the like? Thou that goest about to chastise thy fellow subject for rebellion against his earthly sovereign, art thou a rebel against the King eternal, immortal, invisible? This would be really casting out evil spirits through their prince. The man must be hardened indeed, who feels no compunction, when punishing his brother for crimes which he allows in himself. Sin, at any time, is sin; but when we are inflicting vengeance upon it in others—as the apostle most emphatically expresses himself, "it becomes *exceeding* sinful."

If we consider war as it respects God, we may recollect that peace is ever classed among the choicest of those blessings, which he bestows upon a favour-

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ed people; whose felicity in the enjoyment of it is beautifully represented by the circumstance of converting their military weapons into implements of agriculture; "beating their swords into plowshares "and their spears into pruning hooks." What idea, then, are we taught to conceive of war? Language sinks under the prophetical writers, and creation seems unable to supply them with an adequate image, when they attempt to describe its horrors. It is compared to a "threshing instrument of iron:" it is styled, "the rod of God's wrath; the hammer "which breaketh the whole earth in pieces:" it is said to be a "dashing two kingdoms together, like "potters' vessels," to the destruction of one—perhaps of both. Ambition, interest, or a love of novelty, may, for a while, regard it as sport; but most assuredly, if it last long, it will be found a very serious matter; sweet, perhaps, in the mouth; but afterwards bitterness itself. Its effects may not be thought of at the time, while the wound is warm; but when it comes to grow cold, and fester, and perhaps is turning to a gangrene, they will be felt and mourned, for ages and generations. Smarting under this fearful rod of the divine displeasure—so fearful, that a king of Israel preferred pestilence before it—dare we go on to violate the divine laws in despite of grace, in defiance of power? "Do "we provoke God to anger? Are we stronger than "he?" Now, at least, let us forbear to add sin to sin.

And that more especially, because it is sin which delivers this rod into the chastening hand of the

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Almighty. It is for the transgressions of a people that God suffers these divisions of Reuben to arise within, and stirs up the spirit of princes to take peace from the earth without; that commercial states are shorn by him of their accumulated wealth (to use the energetic language of Isaiah), "with an "hired razor;" that he wastes their strong men, and causes the loud lamentations of the widow and the fatherless to be heard in all their borders; that he commissions war to march through a land, with terror and amazement in the van; famine, disease, and desolation in the rear. If, then, sin be the surfeit, and war the disease occasioned by it, instead of entering upon a salutary regimen for the recovery of national health, shall we continue "daily to drink iniquity like water?" God forbid!

There is yet another argument, which may come home to the bosoms of many who hear me. In the host, when it goeth forth, you have perhaps, a relation—a near one—a father—a brother—a son—a friend dear as life itself—for whose safe return you are bound by the tenderest ties to wish, and, in expectation of the event, between hope and fear, pass many an anxious and sorrowful hour. That event will turn upon the favour of Heaven, which may depend in part, at least, upon your faith and obedience. The blessing may be denied you, because you deserve not that it should be granted. For relations and friends in such a situation, you probably sometimes become an humble advocate in the closet, and lift up your hands to God above in a prayer of intercession; and we know that "the effectual fervent

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"prayer availeth much." But in order to its success, the hands so lifted up must be "pure hands;" the prayer must be that "of a righteous person." For this reason, if for no other—for your brethren and companions' sake—for the sake of your country, which involves in it all other relations and connexions, be persuaded, that virtue and piety make the patriot: and therefore, "when the host goeth "forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from "every wicked thing."

These observations may suffice to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the text, that a time of war should be a time of reformation. But it may be asked, What is to be the nature of this reformation, and wherein is it to consist? An answer may be returned to this question in the concluding words of the text; "Keep thee from every wicked thing;" forsake all evil, and be upon your guard against the return of it: but as some sins, like some diseases, are more prevalent and contagious at certain times, and in certain places, than others, mark well the abominations which discriminate and disgrace the age and the country in which you live, and be more especially upon your guard against them.

"Jehovah," saith the divine Psalmist, "looketh "from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men: "from the place of his habitation he looketh upon all "the inhabitants of the earth; and considereth all "their works." He looketh, then, on all the inhabitants of THIS land; he considereth all THEIR works. And when thus he looketh, what doth he behold?

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He beholdeth a great people, much degenerated, and daily more and more degenerating, from that noble simplicity and manly integrity which characterized the manners of their venerable ancestors; depraving their minds by the adoption of bad principles, enfeebling their bodies by vice and effeminacy, squandering their fortunes at the gaming table, and then, by an act of violence, in the rage and fury of despair, rushing forth to meet their Judge.

He beholdeth that virtue which constitutes the excellency and dignity of the other sex, which is to it protection and ornament, a robe and a diadem, in danger of being totally laid aside, while the courts are crowded with trials for conjugal infidelity.

He beholdeth an enormous and senseless luxury, still increasing with the distresses of the times, accompanied by a dissipation depriving its votaries of attention to all that is wise, and great, and good.

He beholdeth his ordinances neglected; his sabbaths profaned; his sacraments disparaged; his temple forsaken; his ministers despised; his religion torn in pieces by contending sects, while there seems to be scarcely enough of it for each of them to take a little; the infidel openly reviling, or covertly mocking; the faith once delivered to the saints deserted for the dregs of Socinianism; a set of men styling themselves philosophers, wantoning in the paradoxical absurdities of scepticism, leaving us, between them, neither matter nor spirit, neither body nor soul, and doing their best endeavours, in their lives and after their deaths, to render us a nation literally "without God in the world."

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I would not designedly aggravate—and I esteem it my bounden duty on this day not to extenuate—I fear you acknowledge the leading features of the times to be drawn from life.

And is it matter of wonder—is it matter of offence, that a day should be appointed, by royal proclamation, "for a general FAST and humiliation "before Almighty God, to be observed in the most "devout and solemn manner, by sending up our "prayers and supplications to the divine Majesty, "for obtaining pardon for our sins, and for averting "those heavy judgements which our manifold provo-"cations have so justly deserved?" Is it matter of wonder, that we should be punished by the revolt of our provinces? That we should meet with so many crosses, and find so many difficulties, in reducing them? That well appointed armies, under able generals, should, for so long a time together, have done nothing, or worse than nothing? That the common enemies should seize the opportunity? That their fleets should overspread the ocean, and appear upon our coasts with the vauntings of Egypt —"I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the "spoil?" That we should be left alone in the contest, while the nations around us stand still in silent amazement, waiting the event? Waste not the time in fruitless complaints of this misfortune or that accident, this minister or that commander; but lay the blame where it is due, upon national wickedness, which has called down national calamities.

But we are still preserved, and preserved, we trust, for a happy deliverance at last out of all our

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troubles. At the critical moment of our humiliation, when the conviction was rendered complete, that "we "could not trust in our bow, it was not our sword "that could help us," the destroying angel went forth, and swept away the flower and strength of the adverse navy by sickness. The insolence of the enemy in another quarter has been since repressed by the cool and determined valour of our countrymen. The storm, that seemed to be gathered, and ready to burst forth in a neighbouring kingdom, is passed over, and gone; the time of rejoicing is there come, and the cheerful voices of gratitude and industry resound on every side. Nor doubt we, but that the little temporary uneasinesses and disquietudes here, those clouds in our English atmosphere, will, ere long, by the same prudential and salutary councils, be dispersed, and serenity and tranquillity restored among us.

Let the prodigal then return unto his heavenly Father, and he will receive him. Let us take with us words, and turn to the Lord our God. Let us confess his power, adore his goodness, and entreat his mercy; let us revere his word, observe his sabbaths, attend his ordinances, and partake his sacraments: let our faith be blameless, and produce its proper fruits, righteousness and holiness, temperance and purity, patience and resignation, self-knowledge and self-government: let wisdom and seriousness once more be the glory of Englishmen, and folly and vanity fly away—to the place from whence they came.

One thing is yet behind—and, oh that my voice

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could reach the remotest corners of the land, to proclaim to all its inhabitants the wishes of Britain, that her children would dwell together in unity; that they would not employ their shining talents, and extensive attainments, merely in thwarting each other; that they would not revive old jealousies and animosities, or sow new ones; that they would abolish enmity, and strain every nerve in the prosecution of this only contention—who shall stand first, and do most service in the cause of their king and their country.

Such is the nature of the reformation to be desired. Blessed are the eyes that shall see it; but still more blessed the hands that shall have contributed to effect it! Viewed in the aggregate, it may seem difficult—it may seem impossible. But let us divide the task among us, and it will become easy. Let each of us undertake for ONE, and let us begin TO-DAY. "Then will the Lord be gracious to his "inheritance, as in the ancient days, in the genera-"tions of old: the Lord will make our way pro-"sperous, and we shall have good success;" we have had some—we shall have more—"the Lord will "give STRENGTH unto his people; the Lord will "give his people the blessing of PEACE.

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DISCOURSE XXXVI.

A FAST SERMON.

ISAIAH, XXVI. 9.

When thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

IN that part of Isaiah's prophecy which is comprehended between the thirteenth and twenty-third chapters, inclusively, the fate of several cities and countries is denounced. Stationed for the purpose, by divine command, in his watch-tower on mount Sion, and from thence casting his eye over the different states and empires in that part of the globe, the prophet is made to behold, in vision, the judgements of the Almighty prepared for them. He sees the mighty tempest sailing, in an awful manner, around the horizon, and falling successively, as the transgressions of each called it down, on Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, and Tyre. At length, as there is no respect of persons with God, he perceives the storm approaching Judea itself, and the whole weight of the divine displeasure impending on the chosen people, for their wickedness and apostasy. The desolation induced thereby on the holy land makes the subject of the twenty-fourth chapter, where it is de-

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scribed with a sublimity of sentiment and expression peculiar to the sacred writings. There is no need to detain you by a minute inquiry into the particular period supposed to be intended. Isaiah, as his learned translator and expositor has very justly observed, chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin that was to be brought upon the country by these great revolutions, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity both religious and civil; yet with intimations of a remnant to be saved, and a restoration to be at length effected by a glorious establishment of the kingdom of God. Having thus viewed this extensive and interesting scene in all its parts and all its consequences, he breaks forth, in the twenty-fifth chapter, into a song of praise, in which his mind seems to be more possessed with the prospect of future mercies, than with the recollection of the past. The heavenly strain is resumed in the twenty-sixth chapter, from whence the text is taken.

A chorus of the faithful is introduced, ascribing to God the glory of protecting them from their enemies: "We have a strong city; salvation shall he establish "for walls and bulwarks." A procession is seen, advancing towards the temple, of such whose fidelity had been experienced in the day of public calamity; and the ministers there attending are commanded to give them an entrance into those sacred mansions of rest and peace. "Open ye the gates, and let the "righteous nation enter; constant in the truth, stay-"ed in mind, thou shalt preserve them in perpetual

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"peace, because they have trusted in thee." From this example, an exhortation is addressed to the weak and the wavering, the timid and desponding, to repose their confidence in Him who can bruise the strongest enemy under the feet of his people: "Trust "ye in Jehovah for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah "is never-failing protection. For he hath humbled "those that dwell on high; the lofty city he hath "brought her down; he hath brought her down to "the ground, he hath levelled her with the dust. "The foot shall trample upon her; the feet of the "poor, the steps of the needy." A question might be asked, why the good should suffer with the bad? Answer is returned, that nothing can befall them, which is not proportioned to their case, and calculated for their final benefit: "The way of the righteous is per-"fectly straight; thou most exactly levellest the path "of the righteous[a]." The confessors, thus persuaded of the wisdom and equity of God's proceedings, go on to describe in what manner and with what affections they receive his chastisements, passing the calm and silent hours of the night, and the dawn of the morning, in devout meditation and prayer, and waiting patiently till the divine judgements should produce their proper effect, in reclaiming and reforming those who are the objects of them: "Even in the way of "thy laws, O Jehovah, we have placed our confi-"dence in thy name; and in the remembrance of "thee is the desire of our soul. With my soul have "I desired thee in the night; yea, with my inmost

[a] See Vitringa.

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"spirit in the morn have I sought thee: for when "thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of "the world learn righteousness[b]."

Give me leave to offer a few reflections, suitable to the present occasion, on the Teacher, the School, and the Lesson. The Teacher is God; the School, that of Affliction; the Lesson, Righteousness.

I. When from these happy and sequestered seats we look abroad and acquaint ourselves with what is now passing around us, a real scene presents itself, resembling that visionary one exhibited to Isaiah. The rage of man seems to be contending with that of the winds and waves, which shall produce the greatest degree of misery upon the earth; we hear the wailing of afflicted islands, and the cries of nations in distress. Aghast, amidst so much havoc and devastation, the mind shrinks back upon itself, and asks, anxiously asks, from whence proceeds such variety of wretchedness? Whose hand imposes this load of woe upon the human race? We must reply, in the prophetical language, it is "the bur-"then of the Lord," who governs the world which he created.

The primary design of these solemnities is to direct our thoughts, amidst the changes of this mortal life, to the superintending providence of Him who ordereth all things aright in heaven and earth. Destitute of this instructive and comfortable consider-

[b] The preceding citations are made from the bishop of London's translation, as expressing the sense of the original with greater force and precision.

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ation, we might suppose the universe to be under the incontrollable influence of fiends and furies, sporting themselves with the calamities of mankind; or we might deify chance, committing the affairs of it to the blindest of guides, instead of that one all-powerful divine Intelligence, which, in the same undivided instant, both sees and hears all things. We might imagine worlds to have been propagated in succession, like vegetables, whose seed is in themselves; or, like animals, *ab ovo*[c]. We might fancy the evil principle to have been coeternal with, and independent on, the good one. We might argue from the attributes of God against the reality of evil, or from the prevalence of evil against the existence of God.

But the fact is, we cannot reasonably doubt the existence of either. For the existence of God, the argument from the effect to the cause, or from the

[c] "In like manner as a tree sheds its seed into the neighbouring fields, and produces other trees: so the great vegetable, "the world, or this planetary system, produces within itself "certain seeds, which being scattered into the surrounding chaos, "vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed "of a world; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing "from sun to sun and star to star, is as last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, "and immediately sprouts up into a new system—Or if, for the "sake of variety (for I see no other advantage), we should suppose this world to be an animal, a comet is the egg of this "animal: and, in like manner, as an ostrich lays its egg in the "sand, which, without any farther care, hatches the egg, and "produces a new animal; so....."

Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 132.

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work to the workmaster, though much labour has been employed in a posthumous volume to perplex and confound it, stands firm and irrefragable; nor can the incompetence of the human understanding (limited as it is in its views of created nature) to judge of the use and expedience of some of the parts, ever be admitted by us, while we continue in our senses, as a proof that God did not make the whole. Eternal reason, surely, spoke by the mouth of the apostle, when he said, "Every house is "builded by some man; but he that built all things "is God[d]." When we see an edifice calculated to answer various purposes, and carrying in it all the marks of thought and design, we know it could not have built itself. The senseless materials could never have prepared and arranged themselves in such order. The timber could not have moved, cut and squared, out of the forest; nor could the marble have advanced to meet it, hewn and polished, from the quarry. We conclude, therefore, that the house must have had a builder; and we apply the argument, *a fortiori*, to the case of the world, and its Maker, God; the marks of thought and design being here infinitely more and greater. Tully scruples not to assert, that he who denies his assent to it does not deserve the name of a man. Yet, in this learned and intelligent age, have we seen a writer who deemed himself the deliverer of mankind from the bondage of superstition, and the light of the nations, endeavouring to doubt and dispute it away, by an

[d] Heb. iii. 4.

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application of the favourite topic, so thoroughly baffled, some years ago, in the case of miracles. "Will any man," says he, "tell me with a serious "countenance, that an orderly universe must arise "from some thought and art like the human, be-"cause we have experience of it? To ascertain "this reasoning, it were requisite that we had ex-"perience of the origin of worlds[e]." His own words are cited, because otherwise you could hardly perhaps have imagined it possible, that a philosopher should argue, "with a serious countenance," against creation, from the circumstance of his not having been present when it was effected, and because it is an event which does not happen every day. We are not to be induced, by such reasoning, to question the existence of God.

As little can we question the existence of evil. For why are we assembled in this place, at this time? Alas! we hear of it, we see it, we feel it, daily and hourly. But as the deist will not believe in the Scriptures, so the atheist will not believe in the being of a God, till every difficulty can be solved. —Verily, then, each must die in his unbelief. They should believe upon sufficient evidence, and trust their Maker for the rest. The atheist cannot reconcile the notion of a God with the existence of evil. But there is sufficient evidence for the existence of both. Here let us rest. God had his reasons for permitting evil, or he would not have permitted it. If he hath been pleased to discover them in his

[e] Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 64.

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word, or if we can discover them by a view of things compared with that word, it is well. If not, still, reasons there are; and what we cannot know now, we shall know hereafter. In the mean time, let it be repeated—God had his reasons for permitting evil; otherwise he would not have permitted it.—The whole compass of science does not furnish a sounder conclusion, resting on more substantial premises. Here fix your foot, and you sweep away at a stroke all the flimsy sophisms fabricated in the school of Epicurus, to entangle and distress you on this part of the subject. No; in all our sufferings, national as well as personal, whether proceeding from our enemies, from the elements, or from ourselves, we are to acknowledge the hand of Heaven. The whole tenour of Scripture addresseth a community, upon such an occasion, as our church doth an individual labouring under disease and infirmity. "Know this, that Almighty God is the Lord of life "and death, and of all things to them pertaining, "as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, or sick-"ness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, "know you certainly, that it is God's visitation." Philosophy shows us, there are second causes, physical and moral; and the more philosophy can explain of their nature, properties, and manner of agency, the better; success attend her labours! But religion assures us, that as they exist by the power, so they act under the direction and control of the First.

Why, then, often find we in ourselves (for we often do find in ourselves) a certain shyness and backward

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ness in making this acknowledgement? This is a vulgar and canting way of making it, which is disgusting enough, and incurs the suspicion of hypocrisy; but still, in sobriety and seriousness, upon proper occasions, it ought to be made. Is there not a deficiency of faith in the case? "Ye have heard of the patience "of Job:" consider likewise the operation of his faith. The Sabeans and Chaldeans despoil him of part of his property; the lightning consumes more of it; and a hurricane from the wilderness buries his children under the ruins of the house where they were feasting together. But what says he? He mentions none of them—"The LORD gave, and the LORD "hath taken away[f]."

There may be another reason. To acknowledge punishment is to confess guilt. In owning the judgements of God to be upon us, we own that we have made him our enemy; and as the reflection is disagreeable, we fondly endeavour to persuade ourselves, that our sufferings are owing to some other cause—to any other cause. But the just and prudent inference should run thus. Have we made him our enemy? Let us lose no time in making him our friend: since, when we are rolling onward to the brink of the precipice, our fall will not be prevented by shutting our eyes. Let us add to our faith humility, and honestly confess ourselves to be—what God knows we are. This leads us to the

Second consideration proposed, namely, the school in which God is teaching us, that of Affliction.

[f] Job, i. 21.

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But why the school of affliction? Is there no other school in which we may be taught? Does God delight in the sufferings of men? Certainly not. We have his own gracious word to assure us, that "he doth not afflict willingly[g]." He proceeds to do it, like a tender and affectionate parent, with reluctance. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How "shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make "thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? "Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are "kindled together[h]."—Can the force of words go farther?

There is another school, in which we once were placed, under the tuition of mercy, and drawn by the cords of a man, that the goodness of God might lead us to repentance. But if prosperity does not encourage us to be virtuous, adversity must compel us to be so. If we become not sensible of Heaven's blessings by the enjoyment of them, we must be made sensible by the loss. Foolishness is sometimes bound in the heart of a nation, as well as that of a child, and the rod of correction must drive it out[i]. "Misery and sin," says a great writer of the present age, "were produced together. The depravation of "human will was followed by a disorder of the har-"mony of nature: and, by that Providence which "often places antidotes in the neighbourhood of poi-"sons, vice was checked by misery, lest it should "swell to universal and unlimited dominion." In a

[g] Lam. iii. 33. [h] Hos. xi. 8. [i] Prov. xxii. 15.

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word, physical evil was ordained to be the punishment of moral.

But this punishment is seldom inflicted without previous notice. Watchmen are generally sent to sound an alarm, and faithful witnesses are raised up, by their writings and by their conduct, to bear their testimony. Indeed the word of God is a standing admonition to ages and generations, not only by precepts, threats, and promises, instructing, rebuking, and exhorting, but in the historical and prophetical parts of it exhibiting a variety of cases and precedents, among which any nation, at any period of its existence, may, upon searching, meet with one applicable to its own state. So that whatever calamity befalls us, the holy Book, if we will but look into it, may be found reproving us, as St. Paul reproved the mariners in the ship: "Sirs, ye should "have hearkened to me, and ye would not have "suffered this harm and loss[k]."

The first chastisements are of a mild and gentle nature, as it were whispering repentance and reformation in our ears. To generous and well-nurtured spirits, the slightest appearances of displeasure are sufficient. When the heart is hardened, more rigorous measures must be taken, and heavier punishments brought forward. Majestic and tremendous, God arises to judgement. The sound of his thunder is heard at a distance, and all the prognostics appear of an approaching storm.

[k] Acts, xxvii. 21.

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Divine justice, though sure, is slow; and now, as of old, the long-suffering of God waits with so much patience and forbearance, that, as in the life of man there is a certain part, when, for some years together, perceiving little or no alteration in himself and those about him, he almost disbelieves, at least he seems willing to forget, that he shall grow old and die; so by the firm establishment and long subsistence of a nation, remaining nearly the same through the repeated vicissitudes of peace and war, we are tempted to exclaim, "Where is the threat of his "coming? for all things continue as they were[l]." But let us not so deceive ourselves. The nation, as well as the man, is verging apace to that period of life which is to be labour and sorrow: the motion, however gradual and imperceptible for some time, will be dreadfully accelerated in its latter stages; and perhaps, after incessant warnings and admonitions, the grim spectre will suddenly appear in all his terrors, at an hour when we look not for him.

In these particular judgements, as in that last and general one, "God hath appointed a day[m]." And although he hath reserved such appointments in his own power, yet are there symptoms of the disorder coming to a crisis, certain "signs of the times," by which they who are conversant in the Scriptures, and the history of declining empires, may form shrewd conjectures, partly from the moral and partly from the political situation of a people.

[l] 2 Pet. iii. 4. [m] Acts, xvii. 31.

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National, like personal depravity, is progressive, and, at a stated time, attains to maturity—in the language of holy writ, it is FULL; when a voice issues from the throne, "Put in the sickle, for the "harvest is ripe; the wickedness is great[n]."

The wickedness of a country may be styled great, when it has abolished the old, virtuous, manly, national character, and introduced one of an opposite complexion, having established its dominion by fashion, and ruling with a high hand over all orders and degrees, no longer subject to fear and shame, but becoming matter to itself either of glory or of mirth; trampling under foot, and spurning at the very name of that discipline which should check and reform it; according to those most significant and ever memorable words of the Roman historian, containing in them the substance of a volume: "Ad "illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, "quæ vita, qui mores fuerint; per quos viros, qui-"busque artibus, et partum et auctum imperium sit. "Labente deinde paullatim disciplinâ, velut desi-"dentes primo mores sequatur animo; deinde ut "magis magisque lapsi sint; tum ire cœperint præ-"cipites; donec ad hæc tempora, quibus nec VITIA "nostra, nec REMEDIA pati possumus, perventum "est[o]."

When dissipation and immorality reign triumphant in a Christian country, they will soon discard those principles by which they feel themselves condemned, and adopt the system of infidelity. Reve-

[n] Joel, iii. 13. [o] Liv. Præfat.

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lation, after having been for a while "holden cap-
"tive in unrighteousness[p]," disarmed and disabled by heretical and false glosses, will at length be openly denied and rejected—like him, who dared to thwart the pleasures of Herodias—first imprisoned, and then beheaded.

Josephus gives the following account of his unhappy countrymen, at the time immediately preceding their final destruction: "That time," says he, "abounded in all manner of iniquity, so that none "was left unperpetrated. Yea, though a man "should have endeavoured to invent some new spe-
"cies of it, yet could he have fallen upon none "that was not then in vogue[q]." Thus much for practice—Now for faith:—"It was familiar with "them to make a jest of divine things, and to de-
"ride, as so many senseless tales and juggling im-
"postures, the sacred oracles of their prophets, "though then fulfilling before their eyes, and upon "themselves[r]." The chair of the scorner, probably, was regularly taken, and portions of the word of God tossed about upon the tongues of profaneness and impurity, as a Sabbath-evening employment, for the diversion of the rabble. After such an account, we naturally expect to hear of the event which soon followed—the carcass was thrown out, and the eagles flew to their prey.

[p] Rom. i. 18.

[q] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. 8. Edit. Hudson.

[r] Ibid. lib. iv. cap. 6.

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From the political state of a nation, common sense, as well as the experience of past ages, forbids us to augurate favourably, when having been drained of its treasures by a long series of expensive and ruinous wars, it is, in consequence, oppressed by an accumulated and enormous load of debt, the very interest of which is with difficulty discharged by all the variety of taxes and imposts that ability and ingenuity can devise; when the body is grown too large and extensive for the head to govern; and the distant provinces, revolting, occasion, for the purpose of reducing them, a war still more expensive and ruinous than any of the former: when the ancient and avowed enemies of such a country, taking advantage of its situation, combine their forces to support the rebellion against it, aiming to extinguish its glory, the subject of their admiration, and to appropriate its commerce, the object of their envy; while of the surrounding nations, some stand unconcerned spectators, or perhaps look towards a share of the spoil, and others, even its oldest friends and allies, after having for some time secretly assisted, at length openly join the confederacy: when the war becomes one of procrastination and finance, each endeavouring to exhaust the resources of the other, so that the conqueror will probably fall breathless on the body of his antagonist: when, instead of unity and unanimity at home, the counsels and operations of a government, in these perilous circumstances, are clogged and impeded by everlasting contests for places of power and emolument; so

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that apprehensions arise, where there should least of all be the appearance for any ground of them, that the public interest has been sacrificed to that of a party: when, through the prevalence of licentious tenets, for many years with unwearied pains disseminated, and now producing their proper fruits, in an impatience of all law and restraint, discontents, divisions, and searchings of heart abound, ready, at every opportunity, to break forth into tumult and confusion; as it happened to the wretched Jerusalem, that while the Roman armies were applying the instruments of destruction in every direction from without, a faction of zealots within set fire to the city and the temple.

If the foregoing particulars shall be judged applicable in any degree to ourselves, and you shall be of opinion, that the Almighty is indeed thus teaching us in the school of affliction at this time, you will deem it neither inexpedient nor unseasonable to consider,

Thirdly, the Lesson designed to be taught, under this severe course of discipline.

The representation given above has been given, not to produce despondency, but to rouse attention; not to discourage, but only to alarm. If a nation sleep, it must be awakened. It were cruel, in such circumstances, to be afraid of disturbing it. Affliction will not have wrought the effect intended, till we shall awake to Righteousness, and learn, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace and welfare. If the sense of danger be not quick, the efforts to escape will be ineffectual.

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That it may be escaped, we have no reason to doubt. For though the appointment of a general and eternal judgement be absolute, the time fixed for these partial and temporal visitations is always conditional.—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall "be overthrown[s]," cried a true prophet, at the command of his God, in the streets of that great and wicked city. But, at the voice of the prophet, Nineveh repented, and subsisted more than three times forty years afterwards. It is indeed a rule in the divine proceedings, "At what instant I shall "speak concerning a nation and concerning a king-"dom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to de-"stroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pro-"nounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the "evil that I thought to do unto them[t]." By repentance, through faith in our Redeemer, we disarm the wrath of God, because we cease to be any longer the objects against which it is levelled. Should we continue finally impenitent, like those mentioned by Isaiah in the verse following the text, who, "when "the arm of Jehovah is lifted up, will not see," then must we be destroyed, that other nations, admonished by our example, may be the more afraid to offend. But if we ourselves take the warning which otherwise we shall give, then will the great end of Providence in sending these calamities upon us be answered. We shall be reformed, we shall be pardoned, we shall be spared. We shall leave our

[s] Jonah, iii. 4. [t] Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

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dross and scum behind, and come forth out of the fire bright and burnished.

Physical evil, by being made the punishment of moral evil, becomes the cause of moral good. And as things are now constituted since the fall, perhaps there is a very small portion only of moral good among men which does not owe its origin to this very cause. "If pleasure were not followed by "pain, who would forbear it? If the inconvenience "of suffering wrong were not greater than the satis-"faction of doing it, when would mankind have "submitted to the restraint of laws? Were it not "for a consciousness of being liable to suffer the "miseries we relieve, how would charity wax cold! "And how few would fix their attention upon the "future, if they were not discontented with the pre-"sent! In a world like ours, where our senses as-"sault us, and our hearts betray us, we should pass "on from crime to crime, heedless and remorseless, "if misery did not stand in our way, and our own "pains admonish us of our folly." These are, in substance, the observations of the same great writer to whom I have before alluded, who is so well known that he need not be named. And most valuable observations they are. They reconcile the mind to suffering evil, and unfold the mysteries of that divine chemistry by which good may be extracted from it. I cannot forbear reciting from the same place the following just and beautiful description of the whole process of this matter in an individual, from youth to age, which, in passing, you will be pleased to apply for yourselves to the case of a

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nation. And may the issue, with respect to our own, be the same!

"In childhood, while our minds are yet unoccu-
"pied, religion is impressed upon them, and the
"first years of almost all who have been well edu-
"cated, are passed in a regular discharge of the
"duties of piety. But as we advance forward into
"the crowds of life, innumerable delights solicit
"our inclinations, and innumerable cares distract
"our attention. The time of youth is passed in
"noisy frolics; manhood is led on from hope to
"hope, and from project to project. The dissolute-
"ness of pleasure, the inebriation of success, the
"ardour of expectation, and the vehemence of com-
"petition, chain down the mind alike to the present
"scene; nor is it remembered how soon this mist
"of trifles must be scattered, and the bubbles which
"float upon the rivulet of life be lost for ever in
"the gulf of eternity. To this consideration scarce
"any man is awakened, but by some pressing and
"resistless evil. The death of those from whom he
"derived his pleasures, or to whom he destined his
"possessions, some disease which shows him the
"vanity of all external acquisitions, or the gloom
"of age which intercepts his prospects of long en-
"joyment, forces him to fix his hopes upon another
"state; and when he has contended with the tem-
"pests of life till his strength fails him, he flies at
"last to the shelter of religion[u]."

[u] See the paper in the Idler, entitled, Physical Evil moral Good, vol. ii. p. 206.

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Late therefore though it be, let us yet apply our hearts unto wisdom. Had it been done sooner, it might have been done in a way more agreeable, and more to our credit. But let us neglect to do it no longer. The instruction, which we have failed to reap from benefits conferred, let us, however, reap from calamities inflicted, and not subject ourselves to the reproach uttered formerly by the apostle to his Galatians; "Have ye suffered so many things "in vain?—if it be yet in vain[w]."

It is not the business of the day to call our governors to account, but ourselves; to censure their measures, but our own. There is enough to correct and reform at home. At least, let us begin there. We shall have no leisure, for some time, to look abroad. "When thou art converted, strengthen "thy brethren[x];" but be not curious to find fault with others, and careless to amend thyself. Enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut the door, let the most concerning question be the leading one —"Lord, is it I[y]?"

Matters of mere science often terminate, as they begin, in speculation. But righteousness is an art, and must be acquired, like other arts, by practice, by use, by habit. It resembles a lesson in music, which is to be learned indeed by the book; but no man is reputed to have learned it, till he can readily take it from thence, and perform it on the instrument. "He that DOETH righteousness is righteous[z]."

[w] Gal. iii. 4.
[x] Luke, xxii. 32.
[y] Matt. xxvi. 22.
[z] 1 John, iii. 7.

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It consisteth not solely in going through the services of this day; in acts of mourning and humiliation. They are preparatives, and excellent ones; but they are no more. To what purpose confession of sin, if sin be not forsaken? What avail incitements to conversion, if conversion do not follow upon them? Why submit to medicine, if we intend to continue in those irregularities which first caused, and will ever perpetuate, the disorder? Alas! it is labour lost—it is an aggravation of our crime—it is mockery—"it is iniquity—even this solemn "meeting[a]!"

To conclude—Righteousness is not partial; it is not limited to this virtue, or that person in a community, but extends to all the possible duties of all men in every station. "The chastisements of God," as a learned pious prelate of the last century well remarks, "have a general aim. It is not their design, "that we should quit one ill course to pursue an-"other; that we should abhor idols, and commit "sacrilege; fly from superstition, and run into pro-"faneness; cry out of oppression, and bring in con-"fusion; suppress Popery, to encourage schism and "faction! From universal reformation we may ex-"pect universal deliverances[b]." The effect of SUCH righteousness will be PEACE; to procure the re-establishment of which among Christian nations, do these

[a] Isaiah, i. 13.

[b] See a Sermon of bishop Brownrig, vol. ii. page 172; from whence some of the sentiments in this Discourse were taken.

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judgements of the Almighty, now in the world, address themselves to its inhabitants of all ranks, ages, and conditions, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, clergy and laity.

But chiefly to you, O ye Princes, do they call, and their voice is to you that are judges of the earth, deputed by the Sovereign of the universe to rule his people in the integrity of your hearts, and guide them by the skilfulness of your hands. View the state of Christendom, often becoming, for years together, the theatre on which your subjects are sent forth, thousands after thousands, to inflict and suffer, in their turns, the manifold calamities of war. Tell it not in the realms of Hindostan, publish it not in the streets of Constantinople, make it not known in the new discovered islands of the distant sea; lest infidels triumph, and savages laugh us to scorn! Hearken what the Lord God speaks concerning you. He speaks to you out of the whirlwind, in a very audible manner. While you are endeavouring to destroy each other, the fury of the elements, resembling the last convulsions of departing nature, desolates the choicest possessions of you all. In one part of the picture appear blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; in the other, the heavens are in confusion, and the foundations of the earth shake.—If there be any fear of God, by whom ye reign; if there be any consolation in Christ, by whose name ye are called; if there be any bowels of love and mercy; pity the miseries of poor mankind, and wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow; agree to

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let the horrid scene be closed, and restore joy and comfort to a lamenting world. Millions now on earth shall break forth in your praise, and generations yet unborn shall call you blessed.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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